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SOUVENIRS

OF

Madame Vigée Le Brun.

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IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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LETTERS TO THE PRINCESS KOURAKIN.

LETTER I.

My Childhood—My Parents—I am placed in a Convent—My Love of Painting—Poinsinet—Davesne—I leave the Convent—My Brother.

MY dear good friend—you wish me so very much to write you my Souvenirs that I will no longer refrain from satisfying you. What sad feelings will rise within me as I recall the different scenes I have witnessed and the friends who no longer exist, except in my thoughts! However it will not be a difficult task, for my heart remembers well its former friends and

in my solitary hours they seem still to be near me, in my imagination.

I will begin by telling you, dear friend, about my childhood and youth, for they foretold my life, since my love for painting developed itself from my earliest years. I was placed in a convent at the age of six; and there I remained till I was eleven. All that time I scribbled everywhere and on everything—my copy books and those of my companions were filled with little heads and profiles; I drew figures and landscapes with charcoal on the walls of the dormitories, and as you can suppose I was often punished for that freak. During my play-hours I traced on the sand everything that came into my head. I remember at the age of seven or eight I drew by lamp-light a man's head with his beard, which I have always preserved. I showed it to my father who was extremely pleased, and said: *Thou wilt be a painter, my child, if ever there was one.*

I tell you all this to show you how innate in me was my love for painting—this love has never decreased; I even believe it has in-

creased with age, for even now I feel the charm of it the same as of yore and I hope indeed it will not leave me as long as I live. Besides, it is owing to this divine passion that I am indebted not only for my fortune but my happiness; in my youth, as well as at the present time, it has brought me in contact with the most distinguished and most charming characters in Europe, both men and women. The memory of so many remarkable people gives a great charm to my solitude—I can still see those that are no more, and I am thankful that I have still these visions of a past happiness.

My health in the convent was not very strong, so that my father and mother often came and took me away to spend a few days with them, which was very delightful for me in many ways.

My father, Louis Vigée, drew very well in chalks, there are some portraits of his worthy of Latour. He also did some oil paintings after Watteau. The one you have seen at my house is rich in colouring and very spirited. But to return to the delights of

my father's home, I must tell you that he allowed me to try chalks also, and all day long I used to dabble with his pencils.

He loved his art so much, that at times he used to behave in a most eccentric manner, through his love for it. I remember one day he had dressed himself for dining in Paris and had left the house; but remembering a painting which he had just begun he turned back again, to retouch it. He then took off his wig, put on a night cap and afterwards went out of doors wearing his gold-laced coat and his sword, &c. Had it not been for a kind neighbour who reminded him of his costume, he would have wandered all about the city in that guise.

My father was very witty and clever. His gaiety was so natural that every one felt inspired with it too, and very often people came to have their portraits taken on account of his lively conversation and originality; perhaps you know the following anecdote: One day whilst he was taking the portrait of a rather pretty woman, he noticed that when he worked at her mouth

she kept screwing it up to make it as small as possible.

Irritated at last by this trick my father said to her with much calmness:

"Don't distress yourself, Madame, if you particularly wish it, I can draw you with none at all."

My mother* was very beautiful. One can well believe that from the portrait in chalks which my father made of her, as well as from one which I took in oils much later.† She was rigidly virtuous. My father adored her like a divinity; but grisettes had a great attraction for him. New Year's Day was a festival indeed; he used to rush all over Paris, without paying a single visit, solely for the purpose of embracing all the young girls whom he met, under the pretence of wishing them the usual New Year's greetings.

* Jeanne Maissin, daughter of Christopher Maissin and of Catherine Grand-Jean, was born in 1728, at Orges, in the diocese of Treves.

† This portrait is oval, half-length; I painted it at the age of fifteen years and a half.—Ed.

I was naturally religious and my mother was the same. We always attended the mass and the every day services. During Lent we never missed one, not even the evening prayers. Sacred music always had a great influence over me, and the sound of an organ at one time made such an impression on me that I wept without the least idea of why I did so. That sound always reminds me now of my father's death.

In those days my father knew several artists and literary men, who used to come and spend the evening with us. I shall put Doyen* at the head, an historical painter, my father's most intimate friend and my first one. Doyen was an excellent man, full of wit and good sense; his ideas about people and things were always very correct; and he spoke so enthusiastically of painting that he used to make my heart beat with the same feeling; Poinsinet† was

* Gabriel Doyen, born at Paris, 1726, died at St. Petersburgh, 1806. His most celebrated paintings were the "Death of Virginia" and "Death of St. Louis."

† Antoine-Alexandre-Henri Poinsinet, French dramatic

also very gay and bright; many of his works and plays are still appreciated, and he is the only literary man who ever received three dramatic triumphs in one evening: Ernelinde, at the Grand Opéra; Le Cercle, at the Français, and Tom Jones, at the Opéra Comique. It was said at the time by some one speaking about the Cercle, where the society of that period is very well depicted, that Poinsinet must have listened behind the doors to know so well about its ins and outs. His end was very tragical. He was seized with a wish to travel, and began by visiting Spain, where he was drowned in crossing the Guadalquivir.

I must not forget to mention Davesne, a painter as well as a poet, but not by any means a proficient in either art, whose very witty conversation made him always welcome at my father's house. I shall never

author. He composed several very successful plays; "Le Cercle," or "A Fashionable Evening," was long played at the Théâtre Français. He was born at Fontainebleau, 17th of November, 1735, and died at Cordova, 7th of June, 1769.

forget, though I was so very young at the time, how cheerful those evenings used to be. I was made to leave the room before dessert; but from my room I could hear laughing, singing, and mirth, which to tell the truth I did not fully understand, but which nevertheless made my holidays all the more delightful.

When I was eleven, I left the convent, after having been confirmed, and Davesne, who painted in oils, asked me to go to his house, so that he might teach me how to handle a palette; his wife came to fetch me.* They were so poor that they were piteous to behold. One day they begged me to remain and dine with them, as I wished to finish a head I had commenced; and this meal was composed only of soup and roast potatoes. I believe that neither of them made any real meal except when they had supper at my father's.

It was a great pleasure to me not to leave my parents any more. My brother, who was younger by two years than myself, was very

* Davesne exhibited the portrait of his wife in 1774 at the Academy of St. Luke.

handsome, and wonderfully clever for his age; he progressed very quickly with his studies, and was a great favourite with his masters who used to send home most flattering accounts of his work. I was far from having his wit and brightness, and his pretty face, for at that time I was rather plain. I had an enormous forehead, my eyes were sunk deep in my head; my nose was the only good feature in my thin, pale face. I had grown so fast that I found it hard to stand upright, and I used to bend like a reed. All these imperfections were a great trial to my mother. I always knew she had a fancy for my brother rather than for myself, for she spoilt him, and forgave him very quickly when he was naughty, whilst she was very severe with me.

My father, on the contrary, made up for it by petting me immensely. His tenderness endeared him very much to me, so that his memory seems always present with me, and I do not think I have forgotten a single word which he said before me. How many times have I not remembered the following in-

cident, in 1789, as a sort of prophecy! One day my father seemed so depressed and sad on leaving a dinner-party where he had met Diderot, Helvetius, and d'Alembert, that my mother asked him the reason. "All that I have heard, dear friend, shows me that the world will soon be turned upside down."

I will finish this long letter, my dearest, and embrace you with all my heart.

LETTER II.

Death of my Father—I work in Briard's Studio—Joseph Vernet; Counsels given me by him—The Abbé Arnault —I visit some Galleries of Paintings—My Mother marries again—My Step-father—I take Portraits—Count Orloff—Count Schouvaloff—Madame Geoffrin's Visit—The Duchesse de Chartres—The Palais Royal—Mademoiselle Duthé and Mademoiselle Boquet.

UP to the present time, dear friend, I have only told you of my joys; I must now tell you of the first affliction which I suffered, and of my first real grief.

I had been at home for about one happy year when my father fell ill. He swallowed a fish-bone which stuck in his inside, and several incisions had to be made in order to

dislodge it. The operations were performed by the *frère* Come,* in whom we placed every confidence, and who was like a saint. He tended my father with the greatest care, but in spite of all his affectionate assiduity, the wound became envenomed, and after two months of great suffering, my father's condition left no hope of recovery. My mother wept day and night, and I cannot describe to you my own grief. I was losing the best of fathers, my support and guide; he whose kindness encouraged my first attempts at painting.

When he felt himself dying, my father desired my brother and myself to approach. We drew near his bed, weeping bitterly. His face was cruelly altered; his eyes and face, usually so animated, were sunk and dimmed, for already the chill hand of death had laid itself upon him. We took his hand and covered it with kisses and tears. He made an effort to rise, and gave us his benediction:

* Jean Bashillia, called Frère Come, was born at Ponyastine, near Tarbes, the 5th of April, 1703; he was considered a clever operator.

"Be happy, my children," said he. An hour later our excellent father was no more.*

My grief was so great that I was a long time before I could touch my pencils. Doyen came to see us sometimes, and as he had been my father's best friend, his visits were a great consolation. It was he who persuaded me to take up my beloved occupation again, and indeed I always found distraction and forgetfulness of my woes whilst I was painting. At this time I began painting from nature and from casts. I made several portraits in oils and pastels. I drew also landscapes and from casts with Mademoiselle Boquet,† who I then knew. I spent the evening with her in the Rue St. Denis, opposite the Rue de la Truanderie, where

* Louis Vigée, Painter of the Academy of St. Luke, died May 9th, 1768.

† In 1751 Mademoiselle Boquet, Member of the Academy of St. Luke, exhibited in the salons of this Academy the portrait of M. Eisen, painter. This painting was presented by the author for his reception into the Academy of St. Luke. She exhibited in the same year the portrait of Madame Boquet, her mother, as well as several other portraits.

her father kept a curiosity shop. It was a long way off, for we lived in the Rue de Cléry, opposite the Hotel Lubert; consequently, my mother never allowed me to walk there alone.

At that time Mademoiselle Boquet and myself used to draw a great deal with Briard, the painter,* who lent us his designs and ancient busts to copy. Briard was not a very good painter, although he did some ceilings which were remarkable for their composition, but he was an excellent draughtsman, which was the reason that several young artists came to take lessons from him. He lived at the Louvre. We had each our dinner brought us in a little basket by the servant, so that we might draw for a longer time. I can still remember how we used to enjoy buying from the *concierge* at one of the entrances to the Louvre pieces of beef *à la*

* Gabriel Briard, historical painter, was born in Paris in 1725, and died in 1777; he was nominated Member of the Royal Academy of Paintings, April 30th, 1768. He painted amongst other great ceilings that of the Château de Louveciennes.

mode, which were so delicious that I have never eaten anything better in my life.

Mademoiselle Boquet was then fifteen years old, and I was fourteen. We were rival beauties, for I have forgotten to tell you, dear friend, that a complete metamorphosis had taken place in me, and that I had become pretty. She had remarkable talent, and my progress in painting was so rapid that people had begun to talk about me in the world, which caused me to have the satisfaction of knowing Joseph Vernet.* That celebrated artist encouraged me and gave the best advice. "My child," said he, "do not follow any particular school. Only consult the works of the great Italian and Flemish masters; but, above all, do as much as you can from nature. Nature is the best master. If you study it diligently, you will never get into any mannerisms." I have always followed his advice, for properly speaking, I have never had a master. As for Joseph Vernet,

* Madame Vigée Le Brun did the portrait of Joseph Vernet in 1789, it was exhibited in the Louvre during her lifetime.

he has proved the excellence of his method by his works, which have been, and will be always, justly admired.

I also made the acquaintance of the Abbé Arnault, of the Académie Française. He was a man of much imagination, passionately fond of literature and art, whose conversation enriched my ideas, if I may be allowed to explain myself so. He spoke most enthusiastically about Painting and Music, and was an ardent partisan of Glück. Later on he brought that great musician to my house, for I loved music also.

My mother was very proud of my looks and figure, for I had become plump again, which gave me the freshness of youth. On Sundays she used to walk with me in the Tuileries. She was still very beautiful herself at that time, and it is so long ago now that I do not mind telling you that we were followed about in such a manner that I was much more embarrassed than flattered by the attention we excited. My mother, seeing me always so depressed at the cruel loss I had had, thought the best thing to distract my

mind was to take me to see paintings. We visited the Palace of the Luxembourg, when the gallery was filled with the masterpieces of Rubens, and many other rooms crowded with the works of great masters. Now, one can see there the paintings of modern French artists; I am the only one who has none in that collection. These paintings have been since transported to the Museum of the Louvre, and those of Rubens lose much from not being seen in the place they were painted. Well or badly hung pictures are like pieces of music well or badly played. We went also to see some good private collections. Rendon de Boisset possessed a gallery of Flemish and French pictures. The Duc de Praslin and the Marquis de Levis had rich collections from every school. M. Harens Le Preste had a beautiful one of Italian masters, but none could be compared with that of the Palais Royal, which had been formed by the Regent, and which contained so many *chefs-d'œuvres* by great Italian masters. It was sold during the Revolution.

An Englishman, Lord Stafford, bought most of the paintings.

From the time I entered one of these rich galleries, I could only be compared to a bee picking up knowledge and ideas for my art, and becoming quite intoxicated in the contemplation of great masters. I copied several paintings by Rubens, some by Rembrandt and Vandyck, and several heads of young girls by Greuze, because these last thoroughly explained the semitones which are found in delicate carnations; Vandyck explains them also, but much more delicately.

I owe to these studies the important knowledge of the gradations of light on the most projecting portions of the head, gradations which I admire so much in Raphael, who combines, indeed, every perfection. And, indeed, it is only in Rome, and under the beautiful Italian sky that Raphael can justly be appreciated. When, later on, I was enabled to behold those of his masterpieces which have never left their country, I found Raphael to be above his immense reputation.

My father left no fortune; I earned a good

deal of money already, having several portraits to take; but that did not suffice for the household expenses, seeing that I had also to pay for my brother's schooling, his clothes, and books, &c. My mother was, therefore, compelled to remarry.* She espoused a rich jeweller,† who we had never suspected of being avaricious, and yet who became immediately after his marriage so mean that he refused us the bare necessities of life, although I was good enough to give him all that I earned. Joseph Vernet was furious; he continually advised me to pay him a pension, and keep the overplus for myself, but I did not do so. I was afraid lest with such a miser my mother would suffer. I hated this man all the more because he had appropriated my father's wardrobe, and wore his clothes, just as they were, without any alterations. You can easily understand, dear friend, what a sad impression they made on me!

I had, as I have already told you, several

* This marriage took place in January, 1768.

† Called Jacques-François Le Sevre.

portraits on hand, and already my youthful reputation attracted to me several foreigners. Many great Russian personages came to visit me, amongst others, the celebrated Count Orloff, one of the assassins of Peter III. He was a colossal man, and I remember he wore a remarkably large diamond-ring upon his finger.

I painted almost immediately afterwards the portrait of Count Schouvaloff,* Grand-Chamberlain. He was then, I believe, about sixty, and had been the lover of the Empress Elizabeth II. of Russia. He combined perfect politeness with charming manners, and, as he was a most agreeable man, he was run after by the best society.

I received at the same time the visit of Madame Geoffrin,† whose *salon* made her so celebrated. Madame Geoffrin entertained at her

* Madame Vigée Le Brun mentions in her catalogue of portraits, the portrait of Count Schouvaloff as having been painted in 1775, which was seven years after her mother's marriage.

† Madame Geoffrin, (Marie-Thérèse Rodet,) born in Paris in 1699, died in that city in 1777.

house all the most distinguished literary and artistic men, foreigners and courtiers. Without birth, talents, or any fortune to speak of, she created for herself in Paris a position unique in its way, and which no woman to-day would be able to accomplish. Having heard me spoken about, she came to see me one morning, and made very flattering remarks on my person and talent. Although she was not very old then, I should have thought her at least a hundred, for not only did she stoop a great deal, but her costume aged her immensely. She wore an iron-grey dress, with a large flapped cap, covered with a black hood, tied under her chin. At her age now-a-days women, on the contrary, contrive to make themselves look younger by the care they take about their dress.

Soon after my mother's marriage, we lodged with my step-father, in the Rue St. Honoré, opposite the Terrace of the Palais Royal, on to which my windows looked. I often saw the Duchesse de Chartres walking in the gardens with her ladies, and I noticed that she looked at me with much interest

and kindliness. I had just finished the portrait of my mother, which was much spoken of at the time. The Duchesse sent for me to paint her's at the Palace. She communicated to those about her her great sympathy for my youthful talent, so that it was not long before I received the visit of the noble and beautiful Comtesse de Brionne and her daughter, the Princesse de Lorraine, who was extremely pretty, and after that of all the great ladies of the Court and the Faubourg St. Germain.

Since I have already told you, dear friend, how much attention I excited at promenades and other sights, so much so that I often had crowds aroud me, you can easily understand that several admirers of my countenance made me paint their's also, in the hope of pleasing me; but I was so absorbed in my art that nothing had the power of distracting my thoughts. Besides, the moral and religious precepts inculcated by my mother protected me from the seductions with which I was surrounded. Fortunately for me, I had never read a single novel. The first I

read (it was "Clarissa Harlowe," which interested me extremely) was not till after my marriage; up to that time I only read religious books, "The Lives of the Holy Fathers;" amongst others, for everything is contained therein, and a few class-books belonging to my brother.

But to return to these admirers. As soon as I discovered that they wanted to gaze at me with "*les yeux tendres*," I painted them with the eyes averted, which prevented them from regarding the painter. And then, at the least movement round of their eyes, I said: "I am just at the eyes," which was annoying for them, as you can suppose; my mother, who never left me, and whom I had taken into my confidence, used to be much entertained.

About this time the Marquis de Choiseul was amongst the number of my admirers with the loving glances, which enraged me, for he had just married a lovely girl. She was a Mademoiselle Rabi, an American, only sixteen years old. I do not believe a prettier creature ever lived.

On *fête* days and Sundays, after having

heard mass, my mother and step-father used to take me out into the Palais Royal. At that time the garden was much larger and more beautiful than it is now—hemmed in by houses, which quite surround it. On the left there was a broad and very long alley, shaded by great trees, which formed a kind of arch, impenetrable to the sun. It was there that the beauty and fashion of Paris used to promenade. As for the other set, they took refuge some way off under the quince trees.

The opera was then close by; it was in the Palace. In summer it was over at half-past eight, and all the most elegant women left even before it was over, and adjourned to the garden instead. It was then the fashion for women to carry enormous bouquets, the odour of which, added to that of the strongly-scented powder used in the hair, made the air seem quite embalmed. Long after, but before the Revolution, I have seen these *réunions* prolonged till two in the morning, with open-air music by moonlight. Many artists and amateurs sang there, in-

cluding Garat and Asevedo. It was crowded with people, and the famous St. Georges* often played his violin.

It was there that I saw for the first time the elegant and pretty Mademoiselle Duthé, who used to walk about with other women of light character; for in those days no gentlemen were ever seen with such people, if they joined them at the play it was always in covered boxes. Englishmen are less delicate on this point—this same Mademoiselle Duthé was often accompanied by an Englishman, so devoted, that eighteen years after I saw them still together at the theatre in London. The brother of this man was with them, and I was informed that all three lived together. You have no idea, dear friend, what bad women were like in those days. Mademoiselle Duthé, for instance, expended millions; now that trade is nowhere; few would ruin themselves for such women.

* Chevalier de Saint-Georges, a Mulatto, born in Guadeloupe in 1745 and died 1799. Son of a coloured woman and M. de Boulogne.

This reminds me of a speech of the Duchesse de Chartres, whose naïveté I have always enjoyed. I have already written to you about her, worthy descendant of the virtuous and benevolent Duc de Penthièvre. Shortly after her marriage, as she was standing at her window, one of her gentlemen in waiting seeing some of these women pass by said: "here are some shady creatures." "How do you know they are not married?" replied the Duchess in her most candid ignorance.

We never walked in that long alley of the Palais Royal, Mademoiselle Boquet and myself, without attracting great attention. We were then about sixteen and seventeen, and Mademoiselle Boquet was very beautiful. At nineteen she had the small-pox which created quite a sensation, and all classes of society made inquiries about her progress, numerous carriages were at her door every day. In those days beauty was really an advantage.

Mademoiselle Boquet was remarkably talented, but she gave up painting soon after her marriage with M. Filleul, at which time

the Queen appointed her keeper of the Château de la Muette. I wish I could tell you about this charming woman, without recalling her tragical fate? Alas! I remember at the time I was leaving France to flee from the horrors which I foresaw, Madame Filleul said: "You are wrong to leave, I shall remain; for I believe in the happiness which this revolution will bring us." And that revolution led her to the scaffold! She had not left the Château de la Muette when those days, rightly called the Days of Terror, came upon France. Madame Chalgrin, daughter of Joseph Vernet, and an intimate friend of Madame Filleul was celebrating in the château her daughter's marriage, without any display as you can suppose. Nevertheless, the day after, the revolutionists came and arrested Madame Filleul and Madame Chalgrin, who they said had "burnt the candles of the nation," and both were guillotined a few days afterwards.

I will now finish this sad letter.

LETTER III.

My Walks—The Coliseum, the Summer Vauxhall—Marly, Sceaux—My Society in Paris—Le Moine, the Sculptor—Gerbier—The Princesse de Rohan-Rochefort—The Comtesse de Brionne—The Cardinal de Rohan—M. de Rhullièvrês—The Duc de Lauzun—I present to the Academy the Portraits of Cardinal de Fleury and De la Bruyère—D'Alembert's Letter, and his Visit on that occasion.

I WILL now again continue, dear friend, the thread of my narrative in what I call old Paris, the Paris of my youth, for this city has changed since then in every way. One of the most frequented promenades was the Boulevard du Temple. Every day, but especially on Thursdays, hundreds of carriages passed to

and fro, or were drawn up alongside alleys where are now cafés and shops. The young horsemen used to caracole around them as at Longchamps, for Longchamps existed even then.

It was a brilliant scene, crowded with people admiring and criticizing the well dressed women and beautiful equipages.

One side of the Boulevard where the Café Turc now stands, presented a sight which has often made me laugh heartily. It was a long line of old fish-women, sitting gravely on chairs with their cheeks so covered with rouge that they looked like dolls. As at that time only women of high rank could use rouge, these ladies considered they also were privileged to do the same to their hearts' content. One of our friends who was acquainted with several of them, told us that they played loto from morning till evening when indoors, and that one day as he was returning from Versailles one of them asked him for news, he replied that he had just been informed that M. de la Pérouse was about to sail round the world. "Really!"

exclaimed the mistress of the house, "that man must have very little to do!"

Later on, some time after my marriage, I have seen many little plays on this boulevard. The only one which I frequently visited and which amused me extremely was that of the puppets belonging to Carlo Perico. These creatures were so well made and moved so naturally that people were sometimes deceived by them. My daughter, when about six years old and who went with me to see them sometimes, never imagined that they were not alive. When I had told her the contrary, I remember taking her a few days after to the Comédie Française where my box was some way from the play, "And those, mamma, are they alive?" she asked.

The Coliseum was a promenade much in vogue, it was placed in one of the great squares of the Champs Elysées, by building an immense Rotunda. In the centre was a lake, filled with limpid water, on which were held aquatic sports. You walked all round in broad pathways, sanded over and lined with seats. When it was dark everyone left

the garden and adjourned to an immense salon, where you heard every evening excellent music with a good orchestra. Mademoiselle Lemaure, very celebrated at that time, sang very often there as well as many other celebrated singers. The broad flight of steps which led to this concert room was the rendezvous of all the young Parisian dandies, who, placing themselves beneath the illuminated doorways, never allowed a woman to pass without some epigram. One evening as I was descending the steps with my mother, the Duc de Chartres, afterwards Philippe Egalité was standing by, arm in arm with the Marquis de Genlis, the companion of his orgies, and the poor women who passed by did not escape from their most shameful sarcasms. "Ah! as for this one," said the Duke in a loud voice, pointing to me, "there is nothing to be said!" This speech, which several others heard as well as myself, gave me so much satisfaction that even now I recall it with a feeling of pleasure.

About the same time there existed on the Boulevard du Temple a place called the

summer Vauxhall, whose garden was composed of only a blank space destined for walking, and around which were covered benches for people to sit. My wretched step-father, worried no doubt by the admiration received by my mother when in public, and, if I dare say so, from that which I created also, forbade our taking any promenades, and told us one day he was going to take a country house. At these words my heart beat with joy, for I was passionately fond of the country. I wished to go there all the more because I slept nearly at the foot of my mother's bed, in a dark corner which the daylight never reached. So that in the morning, no matter what the weather was like, my first care was to open the window and breathe, so much did I need fresh air.

My step-father hired a little bit of a house at Chaillot, and we slept there on Saturdays and returned to Paris on Monday morning. Heavens! what a place! imagine a very tiny garden; no trees and no shade, except in a little arbour where my father had planted

beans and runners which never grew; and we had not the whole even of this charming garden, it was divided into four parts by little sticks, and the three others were let to shop boys who used to spend their Sundays in firing at the birds. This perpetual noise made me feel desperate, besides I was dreadfully afraid of being killed by these novices, they fired so badly.

I could not understand why such a stupid unpicturesque place as this should be called the country, I was so bored there that it makes me yawn to write about it.

At last my guardian angel sent to my deliverance a friend of my mother's, Madame Suzanne, who came to dine at Chaillot with her husband. Both took pity on me and made me take some delightful excursions. Unfortunately it was impossible to count on M. Suzanne every Sunday, for he had a most singular malady; out of every two days he shut himself up for one in his room, and saw no one, not even his wife; and never spoke or eat. The next day it is true he was all right again and resumed his former habits,

but you can see that to be sure of getting him, one had to be well up in the intermittent state of his health.

We went first to Marly-le-Roi, where for the first time I saw an enchanting abode. On each side of the château, which was superb, were six pavillions, joined to each other by bowers of jasmine and honeysuckle. Cascades came rushing down a hill at the back of the château, and formed a lake on which were stately swans. These beautiful trees, green bowers, basins and fountains, one of which rose to such a height that it was lost to sight, were all grand and regal, for all bespoke Louis XIV. The sight of this exquisite place made such an impression on me, that after my marriage I often returned to Marly.

It was there that I met one morning Queen Marie Antoinette, who was walking in the park with several of her court ladies. All were in white dresses, and were so young and pretty that they looked like apparitions. I was with my mother, and we were retreating from them when the Queen

had the goodness to stop, and desired me to continue my promenade wherever I pleased. Alas! when I returned to France in 1802, I hastened to revisit my noble smiling Marly. The palace trees, cascades, all had disappeared; I only found one stone left which seemed to mark the centre of the salon.

M. and Madame Suzanne took me also to see the château and park of Sceaux. One portion of this park, that which was near the château was systematically laid out in flower beds and parterres, filled with quantities of flowers, like in the Tuileries gardens, the other was left to itself; but a magnificent canal and beautiful trees made it far preferable to my taste. A thing which proved the kindness of the lord of this fine domain, was that the park was open to the public; the excellent Duc de Penthièvre had always desired that every one should enter there, and on Sundays this place was very frequented.

I found it very hard to leave these lovely gardens and go back to gloomy Chaillot. At length, winter obliged us to return for

good to Paris, where I passed the time very agreeably when my work allowed it. From the age of sixteen I had mixed in the best society, and knew all our first artists, so that I received invitations from all quarters. I remember very well dining the first time in Paris with Le Moine, the sculptor, then very renowned. He was a man of great simplicity; but he had the good taste to bring together at his house a number of celebrated and distinguished characters; his two daughters did the honours perfectly. It was there I met the famous Lekain,* whose fierce sullen looks frightened me; his enormous eyebrows added to the gloom of his countenance. He never spoke but eat hugely. By his side, and opposite to me, was Madame de Bonneuil,† the prettiest

* Henri-Louis Kain, called Lekain, a celebrated tragedian, born in Paris, April 14th, 1728, and died in that city, February 8th, 1778. The manuscript diary of Lekain's representations is to be found in the Bibliothèque Impériale at Paris, his memoirs have been published by his son.

† Madame Vigée Le Brun made three portraits of Madame Bonneuil in 1773.

woman in Paris, mother of Madame Regnault St. Jean d'Angély, she was then as fresh as a rose. Her sweet looks possessed such a charm for me that I could not turn away my eyes, all the more because she was seated near her husband, who resembled an ugly monkey, and whose face, combined with that of Lekain, formed a setting of which she had no need.

It was at Le Moine's that I knew Gerbier, the lawyer; his daughter Madame de Boissy* was very beautiful and was one of the first women whose portrait I took. Grétry and Latour, two famous pastel painters, often assisted at these dinners, we laughed and amused ourselves well. It was the custom then to sing at dessert: Madame de Bonneuil, who had a charming voice, sang with her husband some of Grétry's duets; then came the turn of all the young girls, who were much tortured by this fashion, for they turned pale and trembled and often sang false in consequence. Notwithstanding

* It was in 1773 that Madame Vigée Le Brun took the portraits of Monsieur and Madame Boissy.

which little disagreeables, the dinner ended pleasantly, and we always left with regret, far from asking for our carriages, in rising from the table, as is done nowadays.

I cannot speak much of the great dinners though, except by hearsay, seeing that shortly after the time of which I write, I ceased to dine in Paris at all. The daylight was really too precious for me to give its hours to society, and an accident which happened to me, decided me to go out only in the evening. I had accepted a dinner with the Princesse de Rohan-Rochefort; I was dressed and ready to step into a carriage when I thought I would go and see a portrait which I had begun that morning. I wore a white satin dress which I had put on for the first time, and I sat down on a chair which was opposite to my easel without noticing that my palette was placed upon it; you may judge that I made my dress in such a mess that I was obliged to remain at home, and from that day I formed a resolution only to accept suppers.

The dinners of the Princesse de Rohan-

Rochefort were charming. The nucleus of her society was composed of the beautiful Comtesse de Brionne and her daughter, the Princesse de Lorraine, the Duc de Choiseuil, Cardinal de Rohan and M. de Rhullièvres, the author of the "Disputes;" but the most agreeable of all the guests was without contradiction the Duc de Lauzun; none other possessed such wit and humour, he charmed everybody. Often the evening was spent in music, and I sometimes sang and accompanied myself on a guitar. We had supper at half-past ten, and we were never more than ten or twelve at table. It was a race for who could be most gay and witty. I only listened, and though too young to fully appreciate the charm of these conversations, they disgusted me with many others.

I have often told you, dear friend, that my life as a young girl was unlike that of most people. Not only did my talent, small as it appeared to me in contrast to the great masters, make me sought out and welcomed in every salon; but I received besides some

marks of public sympathy, from which I frankly avow I derived much satisfaction. For instance, I had made from the engravings of the time, the portraits of Cardinal Fleury and of La Bruyère. I presented them to the Académie Française, which, through the medium of d'Alembert, its secretary, sent me the following letter which I copy here and which I have carefully preserved.

"Mademoiselle,

"The Académie Française has received with much pleasure the charming letter which you have written to them, and the fine portraits of Fleury and of La Bruyère which you had the kindness to send to be placed in the Assembly Hall, where they have long desired to see them. These two portraits, in recalling two men whose names are cherished by them, will also bring back, Mademoiselle, the remembrance of what they owe to you, of what they are proud to owe. Moreover, to their eyes these portraits will be a lasting memorial of your rare talents, which were known to them by public report, and which

are heightened still more by your wit, grace, and great modesty.

"The Company, wishing to show some token of gratitude in return for your kindness, in the manner most agreeable to yourself, pray you, Mademoiselle, to be good enough to accept your free entry to all their public assemblies. That is what they decided yesterday in the assembly by unanimous deliberation, which was at once inscribed in the Registers, and with which I was charged to make you acquainted, in adding their sincere thanks. This commission pleases me all the more, because it gives me an opportunity of showing you, Mademoiselle, the feelings of sincere esteem with which I have long been imbued for your talents and person, and which I share with all men of taste and honour.

"I have the honour to be, Mademoiselle,

"Your very humble and obedient servant,

"D'ALEMBERT.

"Paris, August 10th, 1775."

The presentation of these two portraits to

the Academy procured for me, shortly after, a visit from d'Alembert, a little man, very hard and cold, but exquisitely polite. He remained for some time and explored my studio, making several flattering speeches all the while. I have never forgotten that, after he had left, a great lady who happened to be there at the time, asked me if I had done those portraits of La Bruyère and of Fleury from life. "I am rather too young for that," I replied, laughing, but very glad, for the lady's sake, that the Academician had left.

Adieu, dear friend!

LETTER IV.

My Marriage—I take Pupils; Madame Benoist—I give up this School—My Portraits and how I drew them—Séance at the French Academy—My Daughter—The Duchesse de Mazarin—The Ambassadors of Tippoo Saib—Paintings which I do for them—Dinners which they give me.

DEAR friend, my step-father having retired from business, we went to lodge in the Hotel Lubert, Rue de Cléry. M. Le Brun had just bought this house,* and as soon as we were settled, I went to see the splendid paintings of all schools with which his rooms were filled. I was delighted to be in the vicinity of so many

* M. Le Brun was then only the principal tenant; he bought it later on.

masterpieces. M. Le Brun very kindly permitted me to copy, and lent me for that purpose, some very valuable and lovely paintings. I owed, therefore, my best lessons to him; and at the end of six months he made me an offer of marriage. I was not at all anxious to marry him, although he was well made, and had a pleasant face. I was then twenty; I had no anxieties for my future, as I earned a good deal of money, so that I did not feel any desire to be married. But my mother, who fancied M. Le Brun was very rich, never ceased to urge me not to refuse such an advantageous *parti*. I at length consented to this marriage,* as much from the longing to escape living with my step-father, whose temper grew worse with every day he was inactive, as from anything else. So little was I inclined to renounce my liberty that in

* The marriage of Mademoiselle Elisabeth-Louise Vigée, daughter of Louis Vigée, Painter and Member of the Academy of St. Luke, and of Madame Jeanne Maissin, his wife, with Jean-Baptiste-Pierre Le Brun, painter, son of Pierre Le Brun and of Françoise Bouffé, his wife, was celebrated on January 11th, 1776.

going to church I said to myself, "Shall I say 'yes?' shall I say 'no?'" Alas! I said "yes," and I exchanged my old troubles for other troubles. It was not because M. Le Brun was a bad man; his disposition was a great mixture of sweetness and vivacity; he was good-tempered with all—in a word, he was very amiable; but his head-strong passion for low women, added to a love of gambling, brought about the loss of his fortune and mine, which he entirely disposed of in such a complete manner, that when I left France in 1789 I did not possess twenty francs, though I had then earned over a million. He had dissipated it completely.

My marriage was kept secret for some time. M. Le Brun begged me not to declare it publicly, as he ought to have espoused the daughter of a Dutchman, with whom he transacted a good deal of business concerning his paintings, &c., and he wished it kept dark till his business was concluded. I consented willingly, for I regretted quitting my maiden name, under which I was very well known already; but this secrecy which

did not last long, had, nevertheless, rather a bad influence on my future. Several people who only thought I was intending to marry M. Le Brun, came to see me to try and dissuade me from doing such a foolish thing. Now it was Auber, Court jeweller, who said, with an air of friendliness and truth :—"You would do better to fasten a stone round your neck and throw yourself into the river than to marry Le Brun." Then it was the Duchesse d'Arembourg, accompanied by Madame de Canillac and Madame de Souza, wife of the Portuguese Ambassador, all three so young and pretty, who brought me their tardy advice, when I had been already married a fortnight. "For Heaven's sake!" said the Duchess, "don't marry M. Le Brun; you will be very unhappy." Then she related several things which I luckily did not quite believe, although they have since been confirmed; but my mother, who was there, could hardly restrain her tears. At length the declaration of my marriage put an end to these gloomy forebodings, which, thanks to my beloved painting, had not depressed me

much. I could not paint all the portraits which were demanded of me on every side, and although M. Le Brun took upon himself to appropriate the payments, he did not hesitate to make me take pupils in order to augment our income. I consented to what he wished without reflecting on it, and soon there appeared several young ladies, to whom I had to give instructions as to how to make eyes and noses, which I was always compelled to retouch, and thereby lose much of my time at my own work, a very vexatious proceeding.

Among my pupils was a Mademoiselle Emilie Roux de la Ville, who afterwards married M. Benoist, Director of the Public Welfare, and for whom Demoustiers wrote the "Letters on Mythology." She drew heads in chalk, and showed much talent, which gained for her a just reputation afterwards. Mademoiselle Emilie was the youngest of my pupils. They were mostly older than myself, which detracted from the respect due to the head school-mistress. I had arranged a studio for these demoiselles in a large attic,

with large beams running across it. One morning I went upstairs and found my pupils had fastened a rope round one of these beams, and were busy swinging, as well as they could manage it. I put on a dignified air, grumbled, and made a long speech on wasting time; after which I tried the swing, and had as much fun over it as the others. You can imagine that, with such lively ways, it was difficult for me to impress them much, and this circumstance, added to the bother of returning to the A, B, C of my art in correcting their studies, caused me to renounce having pupils at all.

The necessity of leaving my beloved brushes for a few hours conduced still more, I believe, to my fondness for my work. I never left my painting till it was quite dark, and the number of portraits I finished at that time was simply prodigious. As I had a great dislike to the costume worn by women in those days, I endeavoured to render it more picturesque, and felt enchanted when I obtained leave to drape my models as I pleased. Shawls were not worn then, but I

arranged large scarfs by twining them lightly round the body and arms, seeking by that means to imitate the draperies of Raffaelle and Domenichino, which, perhaps, you have noticed in my Russian pictures, especially in the one of my daughter playing the guitar. Another of my prejudices was powder. I persuaded the lovely Duchesse de Grammont-Caderousse not to wear any when she was painted.* Her hair was as black as night, and I parted it in front and arranged it in careless locks. After my *séance*, which finished at dinner-time, the Duchess did not alter her head-dress, and went to the theatre without altering it. Such a pretty woman setting the fashion caused it soon to become popular; which reminds me that in 1786, whilst painting the Queen, I implored her not to wear powder and to divide her hair in front. "I shall be the last to follow that fashion," said the Queen, laughing, "I do not wish it to be said that I invented it, in order to hide my high forehead."

I sought as much as I possibly could to

* Madame Vigée Le Brun painted this portrait in 1789.

give to the ladies I painted the expression of their countenances. Those that had none in particular, I painted with pensive looks, leaning nonchalantly against some object. I believe that they were well satisfied, for I could not work fast enough to satisfy the demand. It was a scramble to be placed on my list. In a word, I was the fashion. Everything conspired to keep me there. You may judge as much from the following scene which has always left a flattering impressiou on my mind:—Shortly after my marriage, I assisted at a *séance* of the Académie Française; La Harpe* was reading his discourse on female talent, and when he came to these verses, where the praise is so exaggerated, and which I heard for the first time,

"Le Brun de la beauté le peintre et le modèle,
Moderne Rosalba, mais plus brillant qu'elle,
Joint la voix de Favart au sourir de Vénus, etc."

the author of "Warwick" looked at me,

* Jean-François de La Harpe, born in Paris, 1739, died in that city, February 11th, 1803. He was son of Jean-François Delharpe and of Marie-Louise Devienne.

and immediately the whole assembly, without excepting the Duchesse de Chartres and the King of Sweden, who were present, arose, turned towards me, and gave me such a transport of applause that I felt quite overcome for the time.

These personal triumphs of which I have informed you, dear friend, because you desired me to tell you everything, are far from being compared with the joy I felt when, after two years of marriage, I hoped to become a mother. But here you will see how my extreme love for my art rendered me careless as to the small details of life, for, happy as I felt, I let the time pass by without preparing anything for myself. The day my daughter was born I never quitted my studio, and worked at my Venus tying the wings of Love, in the intervals when I felt no pain.

Madame de Verdun, my oldest friend, came to see me in the morning, and asked me if I was provided with all that was necessary, as she knew how giddy and careless I was. I answered her, with much surprise, that I did not know what was necessary. "Just like

you!" she answered, "you are a regular tomboy. I am certain you will have your trouble to-night." "No! no!" said I, "I have a sitting to-morrow. I will not be ill to-day." Without replying, Madame de Verdun left me a short time to send for a doctor, who arrived soon after. I sent him away, but he remained, unknown to me, till the evening, and at ten o'clock my daughter was born. During the previous months I had painted the Duchesse de Mazarin, who was no longer young, but still retained the remains of great beauty; my daughter had her eyes, and was very like her. This Duchesse de Mazarin it was who was said to have been endowed at her birth by three fairies; one with Riches, one with Beauty, and one with Ill-luck. It is very true that the poor woman could not undertake a single thing, even a *fête*, without some accident happening. Many are the stories told of various disasters which befell her. Here is one which is not so well known:—One evening she gave a supper-party to sixty people, and thought she would have an enormous

pie made, in which about a hundred little live birds were imprisoned. On a sign from the Duchess, the pie was opened, and there burst forth all these terrified creatures, who flew into the faces and hair of the ladies present, much to their dismay. You can imagine the uproar and screams. They could not get rid of these unfortunate birds, and at last were forced to leave the table, grumbling at such a foolish joke. The Duchesse de Mazarin having become excessively stout, it took a long time to lace her stays. Some one paid her a visit one day whilst she was being laced up, and one of her waiting-maids ran to the door, saying, "Don't come in till we have arranged the flesh." I remember that this great size excited much admiration from the Turkish Ambassadors. When they were asked at the Opera which woman pleased them best of all they had seen, they replied immediately the Duchesse de Mazarin, because she was the fattest.

Since I am writing about Ambassadors, I will not omit to tell you how I painted two diplomatists in my life who, though copper-

coloured, had, none the less, splendid heads. In 1788, some Ambassadors were sent to Paris by the Sultan Tippoo Saib.* I saw these Indians at the Opera, and they appeared to me to be so remarkably picturesque that I wished to paint their portraits. Having made their interpreter acquainted with my desire, I was informed they would never consent to be portrayed unless the demand came from the King. Therefore I obtained this favour of His Majesty. I went to the hotel which they inhabited, for they wished to be painted there, on large canvas and in colours. When I arrived in their *salon* one of them arose, brought some rose-water and threw it over my hands, then the grandest one gave me a sitting. I looking him stand-

* Tippoo Saib, Sultan of Mysore, born in 1749, shot on the 4th of May, 1799, at Seringapatam, by an English soldier. He sent an Embassy to France in 1787, charged with the task of concluding an alliance with King Louis XVI., begging for his aid against the English, who he wished to drive out of India. The Mission not succeeding, Tippoo Saib revenged himself on his ambassadors, by causing their heads to be cut off shortly after their return to Mysore.

ing, holding his poignard. The draperies, hands, all were taken from life. He stood with such satisfaction and pleasure! I let the painting dry in another room, and I commenced the portrait of the old Ambassador, whom I represented seated, with his son near him. The father had a superb head. Both were dressed in white muslin, worked with gold flowers, and these robes, which are like tunics with large turned-back sleeves, were fastened with rich girdles. I finished the paintings on the spot, with the exception of some portions of the dress.

Madame de Bonneuil, to whom I had spoken about my sittings, had a strong desire to see these Ambassadors. They invited us both to dinner, and we accepted, out of sheer curiosity. On entering their room, we were rather surprised to find the dinner served on the ground, which obliged us to sit, or rather lie down, round the table. They helped us with their hands from the different dishes. One contained a *fricassée* of sheep's trotters, with strongly-spiced white sauce, and the other I know not what kind of stew.

We made a sorry repast, as you can imagine. It was very repulsive to see them employing their bronze hands instead of spoons.

These Ambassadors had brought with them a young man who spoke a little French. Madame de Bonneuil taught him to sing "Annette à l'âge de quinze ans" during my *séances*. When we went to make our adieux this young man sang us his song, and expressed his regret at leaving us by saying, "Ah! how my heart weeps!" which I considered was very Oriental and very appropriate.

When the portrait of Davich Khan was dry, I sent for it to be fetched away, but he had hidden it behind his bed, and would not give it up, pretending that the painting wanted a soul. I could only obtain my portrait by a little *ruse*, and when the Ambassador found it was missing, he became much enraged with his valet, who he wanted to kill, and the interpreter had all the trouble in the world to make him understand that it was not the custom in Paris to kill valets. Finally, he had to tell him

that the King of France desired the portrait. These two paintings were exhibited in the *salon* of 1789. After the death of M. Le Brun, who had appropriated all my works, they were sold, and I know not who possesses them now.

Adieu, my dear, kind friend.

LETTER V.

The Queen—My sittings at Versailles—Different portraits made by me of her—Her Kindness—Louis XVI—Last Court-ball at Versailles—Madame Elizabeth—Monsieur, the King's Brother—Princesse de Lamballe.

IT was in the year 1779, my dear friend, that I took the Queen's likeness for the first time, she was then in all the brilliancy of her youth and beauty. Marie Antoinette was tall, admirably proportioned, plump, without being too much so, her arms were lovely, she had small and perfectly shaped hands and charming little feet. She walked better than any woman in France; holding her head very upright, with a majesty which denoted the

Sovereign in the midst of her court, without this majestic bearing detracting in the least from the sweetness and grace of her whole aspect. In short, it is very difficult to give any idea to those who have not seen the Queen, how very elegant and beautiful she was. Her features were not at all regular; she inherited the long narrow oval peculiar to the Austrian nation. Her eyes were not large, and were almost blue in colour; her expression was clear and very soft, her nose was thin and pretty, and her mouth was not large, although the lips were rather thick. The most remarkable thing about her face was the brilliancy of her complexion. I never saw anything like it, and brilliant is the only word to express what it was; for her skin was so transparent that it allowed of no shadow. I never could obtain the effect as I wished; paints failed to depict the freshness, the delicate tints of that charming face which I never beheld in any other woman.

At first the imposing air of the Queen intimidated me extremely, but Her Majesty

spoke to me with so much goodness that her kind manner soon dissipated this impression. It was then I made the portrait which represents her with a large panier, dressed in a satin robe, holding a rose. This picture was destined for her brother, the Emperor Joseph II., and the Queen ordered two copies of it; one for the Empress of Russia, the other for her apartments at Versailles or Fontainebleau.

I made successively, at various times, several other portraits of the Queen. I do not know for whom La Harpe composed the following verses:

QUATRAIN POUR LE PORTRAIT DE LA REINE.

" Le ciel mit dans ses traits cet éclat qu'on admire;
France, il la couronna pour ta félicité:
Un sceptre est inutile avec tant de beauté;
Mais à tant de vertus il fallait un empire."

In one portrait I only did her to the knees, with an orange-coloured dress, seated before a table on which she was arranging flowers in a vase. As may be well believed, I preferred greatly to paint her without full

toilette, and above all without a large panier. These portraits were given to her friends or ambassadors. Amongst them was one in which she was represented dressed in a white muslin dress, with the sleeves folded back, but carefully arranged all the same; when this was exhibited in the *salon*, wicked people did not fail to say that the Queen had been painted in her chemise; for it was in 1786, and already calumnious reports began to be circulated about her.

Nevertheless, this portrait had a great success. Towards the end of the exhibition a little play was got up at the Vaudeville, which was called, I believe, "The Re-union of Art." Brougniart, the architect, and his wife, who had been taken into the confidence of the author, engaged a box the day of the first representation and took me to the play. Having no idea of the surprise being prepared for me, my feelings may be imagined when I beheld this painting arrive, and saw the actress who represented it copy me in a most wonderful manner painting the Queen's portrait. At the same time every-

one arose from the boxes and stalls, and turned towards me with vehement applause. I do not believe it was possible for any human being to be more deeply touched and gratified than I was that evening.

The timidity which the first sight of the Queen inspired entirely ceased, owing to the gracious kindness she always showed me. As soon as Her Majesty heard I had a pretty voice, she rarely gave me a sitting without making me sing with her several of Grétry's duets, for she was very fond of music, although her voice was not always in tune. As for her demeanour, it would be difficult to describe its affability and charm. I do not believe that Queen Marie Antoinette ever allowed an occasion to pass by without saying an agreeable thing to those who had the honour of approaching her, and the kindness which she always showed me is one of my most delightful souvenirs.

One day it so happened that I failed to appear at the time appointed for my sitting, because, owing to my health being very delicate at the time, I was taken suddenly

ill,* I hastened the next day to Versailles to make my excuses. The Queen had not expected me, and had gone out driving in her carriage, which was the first thing I perceived on entering the courtyard of the château. All the same I went up and spoke to the gentlemen-in-waiting. One of them, M. Campan,† received me very stiffly, and said angrily, in his stentorian voice: "It was yesterday, Madame, that Her Majesty expected you, and, of course, she is out driving, and, of course, she will not give you a sitting." On my saying that I came merely to take Her Majesty's orders for another day, he went to find the Queen, who immediately sent for me into her cabinet. She was finishing her toilette; and held a book from which she was teaching her daughter, the young Madame. My

* Madame Vigée Le Brun had a second daughter soon after, who died in her infancy.

† M. Campan was always talking of the Queen. One day he dined with me, and my daughter, then seven years old, whispered to me, "Mamma, is this gentleman the King?"—Ed.

heart beat fast, for I felt nervous, knowing I had been in the wrong. The Queen turned and said kindly, "I waited for you all yesterday morning, what happened to you?" "Alas! Madame," I replied, "I was so ill that I was unable to attend Your Majesty's commands. I come to-day to receive them and will leave directly." "No! no! do not leave," she rejoined, "I will not let you have your journey for nothing." She countermanded her carriage and gave me a sitting. I recollect that in my anxiety to make amends for her goodness, I seized my box of colours with such haste that I upset them all, my brushes and paints fell on the *parquet*, and I stooped down to collect them. "Let them alone, let them alone," said the Queen, "you are not in a condition to stoop;" and not heeding what I said, she bent down and picked everything up herself.

At the time of the last journey to Fontainebleau, as the Court, according to custom, had to be in full dress, I went there to behold the sight. The Queen was very

magnificent, covered with diamonds, and as there was a bright sun to light her up, she appeared really dazzling. Her head being so beautifully set on her shoulders, gave her, when walking, such an imposing and majestic air that she might have been a goddess surrounded by her nymphs. During the first sitting I had with her, after her return from this journey, I mentioned what an impression the sight had had on me, and told the Queen how much the manner she had of holding her head added to the dignity of her carriage; she answered in a laughing way: "If I were not Queen they would say I looked insolent; is it not so?"

The Queen never neglected an opportunity of teaching her children these gracious and affable manners which endeared her to all who had to do with her. I have seen her making Madame, then six years old, dine with a little peasant girl whom she protected, serving her first, and saying to her daughter: "You must do her the honours."

The last sitting I had from Her Majesty

was at the Trianon, where I painted her head for the large picture in which I represented her with her children.

I remember the Baron de Breteuil, then Minister, was present the whole time, and never ceased once from speaking against all the Court ladies. He must have imagined I was deaf, or else peculiarly amiable, not to fear lest I should retail some of his ill-natured anecdotes to those most concerned in them. The truth is, I never repeated one, although I have not forgotten them at all.

After having finished the Queen's head, as well as separate studies for the first Dauphin, Madame Royale and the Duc de Normandie, I busied myself about my painting, for I considered it of great importance, and I finished it for the *salon* of 1788. The frame having been taken there by itself, was sufficient to cause numerous evil speeches. "*Voilà le deficit:*" they said; and many other things were told to me, showing me that I should have some harsh criticisms. At last, I sent my painting; but I had not

courage to follow it and know my fate, so much did I dread it would meet with a bad reception from the public. My fear was so great that it made me feverish, I shut myself in my room, and was there praying God for the success of *my* Royal Family, when my brother and a crowd of friends came to tell me I had obtained universal approbation.

After the *salon* the King had the picture taken to Versailles. It was M. d'Angevilliers, then Minister of Arts and Director of the Royal Establishment who presented me to His Majesty. Louis XVI. had the goodness to talk some time with me, and to say he was much pleased. Then he added, again looking at my work: "I do not understand much about painting, but you make me love it."

My picture was placed in one of the saloons of the Château of Versailles, and the Queen always passed it in going and returning from mass. After the death of the Dauphin, the beginning of 1789, the sight of it recalled so vividly her sad loss that

she could no longer traverse this saloon without weeping. She told M. d'Angevilliers to have the painting removed; but with her habitual kindness had me at once informed of her reason for so doing. It is to this sensitiveness on the Queen's part that 1 owe the preservation of my work; for the bandits and fish-women, who came shortly after to seek their Majesties at Versailles, would have certainly pierced it through and through as they did the Queen's bed.

I never had the good fortune to see Marie Antoinette again, after the last ball at Versailles; this ball was given in the theatre saloon, and the box where I was seated was near that of the Queen, so that I could hear what she said. I thought her very agitated, inviting some of the young men about the court, such as M. de Lameth, to dance with her, his family had been treated with much favour by the Queen, and others also, who all refused; so that several of the quadrilles and dances could not be arranged at all. The behaviour of these gentlemen struck me as being most unbe-

coming; I do not know why, but their refusal seemed to me to be a kind of evil omen, a prelude to graver ills. The revolution was very near; it broke out the next year.

With the exception of Monsieur le Comte d'Artois, I painted all the Royal family in succession; the children of France; Monsieur, brother of the King, afterwards Louis XVIII; Madame, Madame la Comtesse d'Artois, and Madame Elizabeth, The features of the latter were not at all regular, but her face expressed a sweet disposition, and her complexion was wonderfully fresh; she possessed the charm of a pretty milkmaid. You must not forget, dear friend, that Madame Elizabeth was an angel of goodness. How often have I not seen her succouring the poor and afflicted. Her heart was filled with kindness; indulgent, modest, sensible and devoted, the revolution showed how heroic she was. We saw her, that lovely princess, walk in front of the cannibals who came to assassinate the Queen, saying, "They will take me for her!"

The portrait I made of Monsieur gave me an opportunity of knowing a prince whose wit and culture one could praise without flattery; it was impossible not to be pleased with the conversational powers of Louis XVIII., he spoke on all subjects with taste and knowledge. Occasionally though he used to sing to me, during our sittings, to vary them no doubt, some songs which were not immoral exactly, but so vulgar that I could not imagine how such rubbish ever reached the Court. His voice was never in tune. "How do you think I sing, Madame Le Brun?" he asked one day. "Like a prince, Monseigneur," I replied.

The Marquis de Montesquiou, equerry to Monsieur, sent a handsome carriage and six horses to take me to Versailles and back with my mother, who I begged to accompany me. All the way, people ran to their windows to see me pass, and took off their hats to me; I laughed at the homage and respect paid to the six horses and outrider; for back in Paris I drove about in flys, and no one thought of looking at me then.

Monsieur was then what is called a liberal, in the moderate sense of the word, he and his courtisans formed a distinct party to the King's. So that I was not at all surprised to see, during the Revolution, that the Marquis de Montesquiou was appointed General-in-Command of the Republican forces in Savoy. I then recalled the strange conversations he had held before me, not to mention the tales which he openly related against the Queen and those who loved her; as for Monsieur, the newspapers told us how he went to the National Assembly and said, he did not come to sit there as a prince, but as a citizen. I do not believe though that that declaration would have sufficed to save his head, and he did well to leave France shortly afterwards.

At the same time I painted the Princesse de Lamballe. Without being pretty, she looked so at a little distance; she had small features, a brilliant complexion, splendid blonde hair, and an elegant figure. The horrible fate of this unfortunate Princess is well known, as well as the devotion to which

she fell a victim, for in 1793 she was safe from all danger at Turin, when she returned to France on hearing of the danger the Queen was in.

There! I am a long way from 1779, dear friend; but I preferred relating to you in one letter the dealings I had as artist with all these great people, of whom to-day none are left but the Count d'Artois, Charles X., and the unfortunate daughter of Marie Antoinette.

LETTER VI.

Voyage to Flanders—Brussels—Prince de Ligne—The painting of the Hôtel de Ville, Amsterdam, by Wanols—My reception at the Royal Academy of Painting—My Lodging—Society—My Concerts—Garat—Asevedo—Madame Todi—Viotti—Maestrino—Prince Henry of Prussia—Salentin—Hulmandel—Cramer—My suppers—I act in Society—Our Actors.

DEAR friend, in 1782 M. Le Brun took me to Flanders, where he had some business to transact. There was then a sale at Brussels of the splendid collection of paintings by Prince Charles, and we went to see the exhibition. I met several of the court ladies there who greeted me most kindly, amongst them was the Princess d'Aremberg who I had seen in

Paris; but the meeting which pleased me most was with the Prince de Ligne,* who I did not know before, and who has left, I may say, an historical reputation behind him for wit and amiability. He invited us to see his gallery, where I admired several master-pieces, principally portraits by Vandyck and heads by Rubens, for he had few Italian paintings. I remember his taking us to see his beautiful seat at Bel-œil; we ascended a belvedere, built on the top of a hill which commanded a view over all his property and the country round. The delicious air and lovely view was most enchanting; but everything was eclipsed in this charming place by the greeting and bearing of the master of the house, who for elegance of mind and manners has never had an equal.

* Charles-Joseph, Prince de Ligne, Austrian General and French littérateur, was born at Brussels in 1735, and died at Vienna in 1814. He was a son of Prince Claude Lamoral de Ligne and Elizabeth de Salm-Salm. The Prince de Ligne left many printed and manuscript works. Madame de Staël said of the Prince de Ligne: "He is the only foreigner who, in French manners, has become a model instead of being an imitator."

The city of Brussels at that period was rich and animated. In the best society, for instance, people were so engrossed by pleasure that several friends of the Prince de Ligne left Brussels sometimes after their breakfast, arrived at the opera in Paris just in time to see the curtain rise, and when the play was over would return at once to Brussels, travelling hard all night; that was considered being fond of the opera.

We left Brussels for Holland and the North. Sardam and Mars pleased me extremely; these two little towns are so clean and well kept that I envied the inhabitants. The streets were very narrow, and being bordered by canals, carriages were not used, but people went on horseback, and employed little barques for the transport of merchandise. The houses, which were very low, had two doors; one for birth, and one for death, which was only used for coffins. The roofs of these houses were as shining as though they were made of steel. The women in this part of Holland are very pretty, but very shy, the sight of a

stranger made them fly. They were like that in those days; I suppose though that having French people sojourning in their country has made them less timid since.

We finished by visiting Amsterdam, and there I saw at the Hôtel de Ville the wonderful painting by Wanols, representing the Burgomasters Assembled. I do not believe there exists any painting more life-like or finer of its kind; it is so true to nature. The burgomasters are dressed in black: their heads, hands and draperies are wonderfully painted. The impression made on me by this painting is so vivid that I seem to see it even now.

We returned to Flanders to see the master-pieces of Rubens again. They were better placed then than they have been since in the Museum at Paris, for their effect in the old Flemish churches was beautiful. Other paintings by the same master adorned the amateurs' gallery; at Antwerp I discovered in a private collection the famous "Straw Hat" which was recently sold to an Englishman for a considerable sum of

money. This wonderful painting represents one of Rubens' wives; its principal effect consists in the different lights given by the sun, daylight and the sun's rays. Perhaps only a painter can judge of its merits and wonderful execution. I was enchanted with this picture, and when I returned to Brussels I made a portrait of myself, and endeavoured to obtain the same effect. I wore on my head a straw hat, a feather and a garland of field flowers, and held in my hand a palette. When the portrait was exhibited in the *salon*, I may say that it added a good deal to my previous reputation. The celebrated Muller engraved it; but the dark shadows of an engraving take away from the effect of such a painting.

Shortly after my return from Flanders in 1783, the portrait I have just told you about and several other of my works decided Joseph Vernet to propose me as a member of the Royal Academy of Painting. M. Pierre, then chief painter to the King, was strongly opposed to it, as he did not, he said, wish women to be received; and yet Madame

Vallayer-Costa, who painted flowers most beautifully, had already been received, and I believe Madame Vien also.* However that may be, M. Pierre (a very second rate artist, for he only saw in painting the art of handling the brush) was a clever man; and besides he was rich, which gave him the means of receiving artists, who in those days were less fortunate than they are now. His opposition might have been fatal to me, if in those times all the true amateurs had not been associates of the Academy, and had they not formed, in my favour, a cabal against that of M. Pierre. It was at this time that the following couplet was made.

TO MADAME LE BRUN.

" Au Salon ton art vainqueur,
Devrait être en lumière.

* Madame Vigée Le Brun might have added more names to that of Madame Vien, namely:—1. Catherine Duchemin, flower painter. 2. Geneviève de Boulogne, flower painter. 3. Madeleine de Boulogne, flower painter. 4. Elisabeth-Sophie Cheron, (wife of Lehay), portrait

Pour te ravir cet honneur*
Lise il faut avoir le cœur
De Pierre; de Pierre, de Pierre."

Finally I was admitted.† M. Pierre then spread about a report that it was through an order from the Court that I had been received. I really believe that the King and Queen had been good enough to wish me to enter the Academy, but that was all.

I gave for a presentation picture, "Peace returning and bringing Plenty with her," which is now in the Ministère de l'Intérieur. It ought to have been returned to me, as I no longer belong to the Academy. I continued painting very hard, I had often three sittings in one day, and those after dinner tired me so much that I became thinner and thinner, owing to no longer being able to digest well. My friends got the doctor to

painter. 5. Anne-Renée Strésor, miniature painter, and later on of religious history as well, and several others; fifteen in all were elected members at different times.

* Only members of the Academy had the right in those days to exhibit at the *Salon*.

† May 31st, 1783.

order me to sleep every day after my dinner. At first it was difficult to accustom myself to this habit, but as I remained in my room with the shutters closed, sleep at last overtook me, and I am sure it is to this prescription that I owe my life. You know, dear friend, how much importance I ascribe to keeping calm. Being forced to work so hard, added to the fatigue of my long voyages, rendered it positively neccessary; the only objection I had to this siesta was, that it deprived me of the pleasure of dining in town, and as I devoted the whole morning to painting, I never saw my friends until the evening. It is true that then I could do as I pleased, for I spent my evenings in the most delightful and brilliant society.

After my marriage I still lived in the Rue de Cléry, where M. Le Brun had a large suite of rooms, very richly furnished, in which he kept his paintings by the great masters. As for me, I was reduced to occupying a little ante-room and bed-room which served me as a sitting-room. This room was hung with the same material as my bed curtains.

The furniture was extremely simple, too much so, perhaps, which however did not prevent M. de Champeenetz writing (his mother-in-law was jealous of me) that "Madame Le Brun had splendid hangings to her rooms, that she lit her fire with bank notes, and only burnt aloe wood;" but I will not tell you now, dear friend, anymore of the calumnies of which I have been the victim; we shall go back to them by and by. They are explained by my receiving every evening in these modest small apartments, which I have described, both courtiers and townsfolk; great ladies, noblemen and men of mark in letters and art—all came to these rooms; it was who would be present at my receptions, and often the marshals of France had to sit on the floor—I remember the Marshal de Noailles, who was very large and very old, had one night the greatest difficulty in getting up again.

I was far from imagining that all these great people came on my account; as so often happens where open house is kept, some came to meet their friends, and others, the

greater number, to enjoy the best music which was to be had in Paris. The celebrated composers, Grétry, Sacchini and Martini, often performed at my house portions of their works before the first representation. Our most constant singers were Garat, Asevedo, Richer, Madame Todi and my sister-in-law, who had a beautiful voice and could accompany anything by sight, which was very useful to us. I too sang occasionally, without much training it is true, for I had never the time for lessons, but my voice was agreeable; the amiable Grétry said I had most silvery tones. However we must put aside all pretentions as to singing when one mentions those I have just named; for Garat may be cited as one of the most extraordinarily talented men ever met with. Not only was there nothing too difficult for that flexible voice; but for expression he had no rival, none ever sung Glück as well as he did—Madame Todi combined a superb voice to all the qualities of a great singer, and she sang serious and buffo parts equally well.

For instrumental music I had Viotti, the violinist, whose touch was exquisitively soft and delicate! Jarnovick,* Maestrino, and Prince Henry of Prussia, an excellent amateur who brought his first violin. Salentin played the hautboy, Hulmandel and Cramer the piano, Madame de Montgeron came once soon after her marriage. Although she was very young then, she astonished every one by her expression and execution.

The ladies who usually attended my concerts were the Marquise de Grollien, Madame de Verdun, Marquise de Sabran who afterwards married the Chevalier de Boufflers, the Comtesse de Molay (all four great friends of mine) the Comtesse de Ségur, Marquise de Rongé, Madame de Pizé, her friend—I painted them together—and a host of other ladies who I could not receive very often owing to the small space afforded by my rooms, also several distinguished foreigners. As for the men, it would take too long to

* Jean-Marie Jarnovick, born at Palermo in 1745, died at St. Petersburgh, November 21st, 1804.

name them, as I believe I entertained all of any note in Paris.

I selected the most amiable amongst these to invite to my supper parties, which were the most amusing in Paris, owing to the presence of the Abbé Delisle, the poet Le Brun, Chevalier de Boufflers, Vicomte de Ségur and many others, who were amongst my most favoured guests. No one can imagine what society was like in France in those days when, business being over, twelve or fifteen people would visit at different friends' houses and there finish the evening. The mirth and laughter which presided at these entertainments gave them a charm which mere dinners can never have—a friendliness and sociability reigned amongst the guests, restraint was laid aside and it was at the suppers that Parisian society showed its superiority over that of all Europe. At my house, for instance, people began to arrive at nine o'clock. Politics were never alluded to, but literature and the news of the day were the chief subjects of conversation. Sometimes we amused ourselves with acting

charades, sometimes the Abbé Delisle or Le Brun-Pindare would recite some of their verses. At ten we sat down to table; my supper was a most simple repast. It was always composed of a fowl, a fish, a dish of vegetables and a salad; so that if I happened to have too many guests there was not always enough for all to eat. It was not of much consequence, we were gay, good tempered, and the hours passed like minutes, towards midnight all took their departure.

Not only did I have suppers at my own residence, but I frequently supped in Paris, for I could only dispose of my time in the evening. I enjoyed then taking some repose after my labours, in the form of cheerful distractions. Occasionally it was a ball, a ball where people were not crushed as they are now, eight people were sufficient to form a quadrille, and the women who did not dance could at any rate watch the dancing, for the men stood upright behind them. Never having cared about dancing, I preferred the houses where music was the attraction. I often went to spend the evening with M.

de Rivière who was chargé d'affaires, to the Court of Saxony, as he was distinguished both for his wit and moral qualities. His daughter, my sister-in-law, sang divinely, and made a good amateur actress. The eldest son of M. de Rivière was charming in comic parts; I took the part of a soubrette in operas and comedies. Madame de Ruette, who had retired from the stage some years before, did not disdain joining our troupe. She acted in several operas with us, and her voice was still fresh and very lovely. My brother Vigée took the first parts very well; in fact all our actors were excellent, except Talma. You will laugh at this, but the fact is that Talma, who acted the lovers' parts, was awkward, and embarassed, and no one could have foreseen that he would become an inimitable actor. My surprise was great I confess, when I beheld our *jeune premier* outdo Larive, and even Kain. But the time it took to work this metamorphosis, and all those of the same nature, proves to me that dramatic talent is one of the last to develop itself. If you take the trouble to

look around, you will find that there never yet existed any actor who was great in his youth.

This is an immensely long letter, I have no space to tell you about a certain Greek supper which made a considerable sensation, so I must reserve that for another time.

Ever your friend.

LETTER VII.

The Greek Supper—Ménageot—M. de Calonne—Mademoiselle Arnoult—Calumny—Madame de S. . .—Her Perfidy.

HERE, my dear friend, is an exact account of the most brilliant supper I ever gave.

One evening I had invited twelve or fifteen friends to hear a reading of the poet Le Brun, whilst I was resting, before they arrived, my brother read me some pages of the Travels of Anacharsis. When he reached the part describing Greek dinners, and the different sauces and food they had, he said, "We ought to try some of those things

to-night." I immediately spoke to my cook and told her what to do, and we decided she should make one sauce for the fowl, and another for the eels. As I was expecting some very pretty women, I thought we might all dress up in Greek costumes so as to create a surprise for M. de Vaudreuil and M. Boutin who we knew could not arrive before ten. My studio, full of the things with which I draped my models, provided me with several clothes, and the Comte de Parois, who lodged in my house, had a fine selection of Etruscan vases. He came to see me that day, as it happened, I informed him of my project and he brought me a quantity of vases to choose from. I dusted them carefully and placed them on a mahogany table, laid without a cloth. I then placed a large screen behind the chairs, which I concealed by covering it here and there with a drapery, like that which is seen in some of Poussin's paintings. A hanging lamp threw a strong light on the table. At last everything was prepared, even my costumes, the first to arrive was a daughter of Joseph Vernet, the charm-

ing Madame Chalgrin. Immediately I dressed her hair and draped her, then came Madame de Verneuil, renowned for her beauty; Madame Vigée, my sister-in-law, who, without being pretty, had the most lovely eyes; and there they were all three metamorphosed into *bona fide* Athenians. Le Brun-Pindare came in, we took off his powder, and undid his side curls, and on his head I placed a wreath of laurel with which I had painted young Prince Henry Lubomirski, I had represented him kneeling before a laurel bush and plaiting a crown. His painting has always remained in the family; the King of Poland told me, when at St. Petersburg, that never would they consent to part with it at any price, even to him. The Comte de Parois had a large purple mantle into which I draped my poet, and in a twinkling there was Pindare transformed into Anacreon. Then came the Marquis de Cubières. Whilst they went to his house for his guitar, which he had had mounted as a golden lyre, I costumed him also, as well as M. de Rivière (my

sister-in-law's brother) Ginguené and Chaudet the famous sculptor.

It was getting late, I had not much time to think of myself; but as I always wore white tunic-shaped dresses, now called blouses, I only needed a veil and crown of flowers on my head. I took great pains with my daughter, a charming child, and Mademoiselle de Bonneuil, now Madame Regnault d'Angély, who was very pretty. Both were most graceful to behold, bearing each an antique vase and waiting on us.

At half-past nine the preparations were over, and as soon as we were seated the effect of this arrangement was so novel and picturesque that we kept rising in turns in order to look at those who were seated.

At ten we heard the carriage of the Comte de Vaudreuil and de Boutin and when these two gentlemen entered the room, they found us singing the chorus from Glück; the God of Paphos and Guido, with M. de Cubières accompanying us on his lyre.

I never in my life saw two such astonished faces as those of M. de Vaudreuil and his

companion. They were surprised and delighted, and could hardly tear themselves away from looking at us in order to sit down in the places reserved for them. Besides the two dishes I have mentioned, we had a cake made of honey and Corinthian grapes, and two plates of vegetables. We did indeed drink that evening a bottle of old Cyprian wine which I had had given me, but that was our only excess. We sat a long time at table, and Le Brun recited several odes to us. We all spent a most enjoyable evening.

M. Boutin and M. de Vaudreuil were so enthusiastic about it, that they spread it abroad the next day amongst their friends. Some Court ladies asked me for a second representation of this amusement, but I refused for several reasons, and many of them were annoyed with me in consequence. Soon the rumour spread that this supper had cost me twenty thousand francs. The King spoke angrily about it to the Marquis de Cubières, who luckily had been one of my

guests, and was able to tell him how much it had been exaggerated.

Nevertheless what was rumoured at Versailles at twenty thousand francs, spread to Rome at forty thousand; at Vienna the Baronne de Strogonoff informed me I had spent sixty thousand on my supper, and at St. Petersburg, as you know, the sum remained at eighty thousand, whereas, to tell the truth, my Greek supper only cost me fifteen francs. The saddest part of all this was that these shameful stories were carried round Europe by my own compatriots, and that ridiculous calumny was not the only one with which my life was made unhappy, it is only too true that since I made my appearance in the world I have been a prey to malevolence and stupidity. One tale was that my works were not done by myself; M. Ménageot painted my pictures and even my portraits, although so many people could naturally bear witness to the contrary; this absurd report did not cease till I had been received at the Royal Academy of Painting. Then, as I exhibited in the same *salon* as

the author of Méléagro, the truth came out: for Ménageot, whose talent and counsels I fully appreciated, had a style of painting quite different to mine. His pictures are finely composed, and in a good historical style. This artist excelled in his draperies, and his Leonardo da Vinci, dying in the arms of Francis I. is very remarkable, but not equal to the Méléagro at the Gobelins. M. Ménageot was very handsome, amiable, witty and sociable; he was a great favourite in society.

Although I believe I was a most inoffensive person, I had enemies: not only amongst women, who disliked my not being as plain as they were, but several could not forgive me for being the vogue, and getting more money for my paintings than they did—the result was many gossiping stories, one of which distressed me very much.

Shortly before the Revolution I made a portrait of M. de Calonne, and exhibited it at the *salon* of 1785; I had painted this Minister seated, a half length picture: which caused Mademoiselle Arnould to say, when

she saw it: "Madame Le Brun has cut off his legs so that he may not run away." Unfortunately this witty remark was not the only one to which my painting gave rise; the most dreadful calumnies were invented about the picture. Some asserted that the Controler-General had given me a number of those bon-bons, called curl-papers, wrapped up in bank notes; others that I had received in a pasty a sum large enough to ruin the Exchequer. The truth was that M. de Calonne had sent me four thousand francs in a box valued at twenty louis; several people are still alive who were present when I received it, and can certify to the truth of my statement. They were surprised at the smallness of the sum; for shortly before M. de Beaujon, whom I had painted in the same way, sent me eight thousand francs (three hundred and twenty pounds) and no one found the price exorbitant, even then. The stone once set rolling, there were no end of evil disposed persons to keep it going. I was harassed with libels, accusing me of having a secret liaison with

M de Calonne; a man named Gorsas* whom I never knew or saw, and who was a violent Jacobite, deluged me with wicked lies.

The misfortune was that M. Le Brun who, against my wishes, had built a house in the Rue Gros-Chenet, gave by this means a pretext for calumny. Certainly we had both earned sufficient money to allow of this expense; nevertheless, certain people asserted that M. de Calonne paid for the house. He would have paid for it very tardily; for until my return from Russia in 1801, the payment was not quite finished, M. Le Brun having left this part of the business to me, to my great disgust. "You see," I frequently said to M. Le Brun, "what infamous stories they tell of me!" "Let them talk," he replied in just indignation, "when you die, I will erect a pyramid in my garden, and on it I will have engraved the list of your portraits; they will know then what a fortune you have made." But

* Gorsas (Antoine-Joseph) was a political writer and was guillotined, October 7th, 1793.

I must own that this honour consoled me very slightly for my present annoyance. This annoyance being all the more keen, that no one less than myself could possibly fear becoming the object of degrading thoughts. I was so indifferent on the subject of money, that I scarcely knew its value; the Comtesse de la Guiche, who is still alive, could affirm that having come to arrange the price of her portrait which she wished me to make, told me that she could not afford to pay more than a thousand crowns; I replied that M. Le Brun, would not allow me to take less than a hundred louis. This defect of calcution I found very disadvantageous to me during my last journey to London; I constantly forgot that guineas were worth more than a louis, and for my portraits; (amongst others that of Madame Canning in 1803,) I made my account as though I was in Paris.

All those who surrounded me knew that M. Le Brun took possession of all the money I earned, telling me that he

required it for his business; frequently I had only six francs in my purse. In 1788, when I made the portrait of the handsome Prince Lubomirski, then a youth, his aunt the Princesse Lubomirski sent me twelve thousand francs, and I begged M. Le Brun to let me have two louis; but he refused, pretending that he had need of the entire sum to pay a debt. Besides this, M. Le Brun frequently appropriated money that was paid, and neglected to tell me that I had been paid. Once in my life, in the month of September, 1789 I received the price of a portrait; it was that of the Bailly de Crussol, who sent me one hundred louis. Happily my husband being absent I was able to keep this sum, which a few days afterwards, on the 5th of October, enabled me to journey to Rome.

My indifference to money was no doubt caused by the small need I had to be rich. I lived very quietly, and spent little on my toilette, I was often reproached with negligence on this point, for I wore generally nothing but white dresses, either muslin or

linen, and I never wore full dress except for my *séances* at Versailles. My head-dress cost me nothing, I arranged my hair myself, and generally twisted round my head a muslin kerchief, as can be seen in the portraits of myself which are in Florence, St. Petersburg and at Paris, at M. de Laborde's. In all my portraits I am painted thus, with one exception, which is at the Museum of the Louvre, where I am attired as a Greek.

Certes, it was not a woman of this kind who could gain the title of receiver-general of finances, and besides M. de Calonne had no attractions for me, for he wore a lawyer's wig! I always detested them, and judge then, with my love of the picturesque, how could I have accustomed myself to a wig! And I once refused a rich marriage because the gentleman wore one; and I had a great dislike to paint men who wore them.

The most surprising part of this affair, was that there had never been a shadow of truth in the calumny; I scarcely knew M.

de Calonne. Once only in my life had I been in his house, on the occasion of his giving a grand soirée to Prince Henry of Prussia, and he had thought it proper to invite me; also I recollect having finished his portrait in so much haste that I did not copy his hands, which I was always in the habit of doing from my models. I should therefore never have imagined from what source these malignant stories could have arisen, had I not discovered afterwards a most perfidious action worthy of the lower regions.

M. de Calonne frequently visited in the Rue Gros-Chenet (before I had a house there) a certain Madame de S——, wife of D——, surnamed the Roué. Madame de S—— had a charming sweet face, though one might perceive something deceitful in her expression, and M. de Calonne was very much in love with her. At the time of which I speak she had begged me to take her portrait, and one day when she was having a sitting, she asked me in her usual sweet manner if I would lend her my carriage

that evening to take her to the theatre; I consented, and my coachman drove to her house to take her. The next morning I wanted my horses for eleven o'clock; but when the time came neither coachman or carriage had returned. I sent at once a messenger to Madame de S——. Madame de S—— had not returned; she had passed the night at the Hôtel des Finances! Imagine my indignation when I heard this some days afterwards from my coachman, who also related it to several persons in my house. In thinking, that if the people at the Hôtel des Finances had asked the name of his master, this man would have naturally replied that it belonged to Madame Le Brun, I was almost beside myself with rage. It is useless to add that I never saw any more of Madame de S——, who I am told lives at Toulouse, and has become extremely pious and devout. May God forgive her! Did she want to save her reputation at the expense of mine? Did she hate me? I do not know; but she did me a

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great injury, for the long details on which I have entered, dear friend, will sufficiently prove to you how I have suffered from a calumny which was so inconsistent with my character and the conduct of my whole life, which I venture to say has always been honourable.

This is a sad letter, enough to disgust one with celebrity, above all when one has the misfortune to be a woman. A gentleman said to me one day: "When I look at you, and think of your renown, I seem to see rays of glory round your head." "Ah!" I replied, sighing, "there are many little serpents in rays of that kind."

In fact, is there ever a great reputation made that does not excite envy? It is true that it draws to you all your most distinguished contemporaries, and this society is a great consolation. When I think of the many amiable kind people whose acquaintance and friendship I owe to my art, I am happy that my name

is known; and to conclude in one word, dear friend, when I think of you, I forget the scandal-mongers.

Adieu.

LETTER VIII.

Le Kain—Brizard—Mademoiselle Dumesnil—Monvel—Mademoiselle Rancourt—Mademoiselle Sainval—Madame Vestris—Larive—Clairon—Talma—Préville Dugazon—Mademoiselle Mars—Madame St. Huberti—The two Vestris—Cailleau.

MY greatest recreation was going to the theatre, and I can assure you that at the time of which I write the actors were so admirable that they have never been excelled. I perfectly recollect having seen the celebrated Le Kain act, though I was too young to appreciate his great talent; the applause and spontaneous enthusiasm which he excited proved to me even then what a splendid tragedian

he was. The astonishing ugliness of Le Kain was not noticed in certain parts. A chevalier's costume for example softened the harsh and repulsive expression of a face whose features were irregular, so that one could watch him when he played Tancred; but in the rôle of Orosmane, in which I once saw him, the turban made him so hideous that though I admired his noble acting, he positively made me frightened. At the time when Le Kain played his first parts, and even some years later, I saw Brizard and Mademoiselle Dumesnil. Brizard took the parts of the "fathers," and nature seemed to have fitted him for this employment; his white hair, and imposing stature, his superb voice, gave him the most noble and respectable appearance imaginable. He excelled most in King Lear, and in the Œdipus of Ducis. You would really have thought you saw these unfortunate princes, so grand was the aspect of the man who represented them.

Mademoiselle Dumesnil, though small and very plain, excited the greatest enthusiasm

in the tragic parts. Her talent, however, was uncertain; she fell sometimes into trivialities but she had also sublime moments. In general, she expressed passion better than tenderness, unless it was maternal, for one of her best parts was Mérope. It sometimes happened that Mademoiselle Dumesnil in playing a part of the piece produced no effect on her audience; suddenly she would become animated, and then her manner, her voice, her look, all became so eminently tragical, that she carried the whole house with her. I am told that before appearing on the stage, she always drank a bottle of wine, and had one in reserve behind the scenes.

One of the most remarkable actors at the Théâtre Français in tragedy and high comedy was Monvel. Some physical disadvantages, and a weak voice, precluded him from taking a first place; but his spirit, his enthusiasm, and above all the correctness of his diction left nothing to be desired. On my return to Paris, he had quitted the rôle of *jeunes premiers* for that of *pères*

nobles. I saw him play Augustus of Cinna and l'Abbé de l'Epée in an admirable manner; in this last piece he was so perfectly natural, that once on leaving the scene he bowed to the actors of the piece, I rose and returned his bow, which greatly amused the friends I was with.

The most brilliant début which I remember and have seen, was that of Mademoiselle Rancourt in the rôle of Dido. She was not more than eighteen or twenty years of age. The beauty of her face, figure, voice and diction all promised a perfect actress; joined to all her other advantages, she had a remarkably modest manner and an unblemished reputation, which made her much sought after by all the great ladies of Paris. They gave her jewellery, costumes for the theatre, and money for herself and father whom she never left; they say that the happy mortal who first triumphed over so many virtues was the Marquis de Bièvre, and that when she left him for another lover, he cried: "Ah! l'ingrate à ma rente!" Mademoiselle Rancourt always remained a great

tragedian, but her voice became so harsh and hard, that when not looking at her you might have imagined you heard a man. She acted at the theatre until her death, playing the part of mothers and queens with infinite success.

I have also witnessed the acting of the Mesdemoiselles Sainval, and Madame Vestris, the sister of Dugazon. The two first named wept too frequently; but they seemed to me to be superior as tragedians to Madame Vestris, who, beautiful though she was, never obtained any great success, unless in the rôle of Gabrielle de Vergy, where the effect she produced in the last act was heart-breaking; it must also be added that this scene was horrible.

Larive who, unfortunately for himself, succeeded Le Kain, the recollection of whom had not died, had more talent than the old theatre goers gave him credit for; it was the comparison between himself and Le Kain which was injurious to him, for he lacked neither in energy or noble bearing. He was handsome, tall, well made, but he was never

easy in his gait, which made people say he walked on one side of himself.

Larive had very good manners, and conversed with much spirit, even on subjects not connected with his profession, so much so that he always mixed in good society.

My brother introduced him to me, and as I knew Larive to be intimately acquainted with Mademoiselle Clairon, I expressed to him my great desire to know this grand tragedian, whom I had not seen act. He immediately invited me to dine with him, in order to meet her, which I accepted at once. Two days afterwards I went to his house in the Gros-Caillou, which was very charming and arranged with perfect taste, besides possessing a lovely garden, which, though in Paris, seemed like the country. Larive showed me his arbours under the climbing bine as you see them in the environs of Naples, and just as we entered the dining-room Mademoiselle Clairon was announced. I had pictured to myself that she was very tall; and on the contrary she was short and very thin, she held her head

very erect, which gave her a dignified air. I never heard anyone speak with so much emphasis, for she retained her tragic tone and airs of a princess; but she struck me as being clever and well informed. I sat beside her at table and enjoyed much of her conversation. Larivè showed her the greatest respect and attention.

On my return to France, I was delighted to meet Larive again, whilst on a visit to the Marquise de Groslier at Epinay. He had retired from the theatre, and lived at a charming country-seat in the neighbourhood. He frequently visited Madame de Groslier, and entertained us by reading aloud; the manner he recited poetry was perfect, added to which his voice was splendid.

Talma, our last great tragic actor, surpassed to my mind all the others. There was genius in his acting. One may also say that he revolutionised art: in the first place by his true and pure diction, and in insisting on an innovation in the costumes, attiring himself as a Greek or Roman, as the case

might be, to play Achilles or Brutus, for which I felt deeply obliged to him. Talma had a splendid head and the most expressive face, and no matter to what lengths the fire of his acting carried him, he was always dignified, which to me appears one of the first qualities in a tragic actor. His voice was sometimes a little hollow; and was most suitable to express rage or profound emotion; he shone most in the rôles of Oreste and Manlius; but in all he was generally sublime. The last which he composed has never been played by any one since. No one, I believe, would have ventured to act it, for Talma was in this piece superior even to himself; he was no longer an actor, but Charles VI. in person, an unfortunate king and madman, in his fearfully true delineation. Alas! death speedily followed after this triumph; and what Paris applauded so vehemently, was but the song of the swan.

Talma was an excellent man, and one of the easiest to get on with that could possibly be met. He did not appear to care much about shining in society, to draw him

out it was necessary that the conversation should touch on anything which interested his heart and mind; then he became very interesting to listen to, especially when he conversed on his art.

Comedy at this time was perhaps even richer in talent than tragedy. I often had the pleasure of seeing Préville act. It was delightful and inimitable! His style was so natural, sparkling and gay! No matter what he played, whether Crispin, Sosie, Figaro, you would not have recognised him to be the same man, he had so many different ways of acting comic parts; he was so true to nature, that all who have tried to imitate him have only shown how indifferent they were. I do not except Dugazon, for he possessed much talent certainly, but in Figaro, for example, he fell far short of his model.

I often dined with Préville; he was a most amiable host; his wit and gaiety charmed every one. Dugazon, his successor in comic parts, would have made an excellent comedian had he not been possessed with the desire of always making the public laugh,

which often became quite a farce. He played certain parts perfectly; that of a valet for instance. His conduct during the Revolution was atrocious; he was one of those who brought back the King from Varennes, an eye-witness told me he saw him at the door of the carriage, his gun on his shoulder. Remember that this man had been most kindly treated by the Court, and principally so by the Comte d'Artois.

I remember seeing Mademoiselle Doligny in the rôle of *jeune première* which she acted beautifully. She was so natural, clever and good, that one forgot how ugly she was. I was present at the first appearance of Mademoiselle Contat. She was very pretty and well made, but acted so badly at first that no one could have foreseen she would become such an excellent actress.

At the time that all these great actors of whom I am telling you began to grow old, there arose amongst them a young genius who is now the ornament of the French stage. Mademoiselle Mars then acted in the more simple parts most inimitably; she ex-

celled in Victorine in the "Philosophe sans le savoir," and in twenty others in which she has never been equalled, she was so thoroughly natural and true. When you saw Mademoiselle Mars, dear friend, she had already began to replace Mademoiselle Contat. You must remember her pretty face, figure, and her voice, that angel's voice! fortunately that face, figure and voice are so well preserved that Mademoiselle Mars has no age, and will, I am sure, never be old; every evening the delight of the public show they are of my opinion.

Another very talented actress was Madame St. Huberti, the beautiful and impressive music of Piccini, Sacchini and Glück just suited her superb voice, and in the roles of Alcestes and Didon she was most affecting. She was not pretty but had an expressive countenance—the Comte d'Entraigues, a very handsome distinguished man fell so much in love with her that he married her. The Revolution having broken out they took refuge in London, and it was there, while going out one evening, that both were assassinated,

no motive was ever found for the dreadful event, neither was any trace discovered of the assassins.

Gardel and Vestris senior were first in the ballet. I often saw them dance together, especially in a chaconne,* which happens in Grétry's operas, a chaconne which I believe set all Paris jumping: it was a *pas de deux*, in which the two leading men pursued Mademoiselle Guimard, who was very small and thin, which caused people to compare them to two dogs disputing over a bone. I always considered Gardel very inferior to the old Vestris, who was a handsome big man, and perfect in a slow stately dance. I cannot describe how gracefully he took off and put on his hat in the bow preceding the minuet; all the young Court ladies took lessons of him before their presentation in making the three bows.

The elder Vestris was succeeded by his son, who was the most wonderful dancer for grace and lightness ever known, although

* A Chaconne is an old French dance.

our dancers are not sparing of twists and pirouettes, no one will make as many as he did; he used to spring into the air with such bounds that he might have had wings, which caused his father to say: "If my son touches the ground sometimes, it is only out of a kind regard for his comrades."

One of the most beloved actors was Cailleau, he left the stage when I was still very young, but I saw him act twice in "Annette and Lubin." His handsome face and gay animated manner, combined with his beautiful voice, will always be remembered by me, even had I not had the pleasure of acting with him in private. At the time of his great successes he met with a slight accident to his throat whilst on the stage, an event which often happens to singers; a hiss went round the theatre, Cailleau was so offended that he left it that same evening, and no one could persuade him to play before the public again.

When the Revolution broke out he was much suspected, as he had received many

kindnesses from the Comte d'Artois. I was told, but I will not believe it, that he proved ungrateful, and played the part of a Jacobin. If it is true, I am convinced that the fear of his wife turned his head. I have good reasons for believing that she was a Republican; in 1791 I received in Rome a letter from her imploring me to return to France, saying that we should be all equal, and it would be a *golden age*. Happily I did not believe her, for what an age of gold succeeded! Shortly after getting this letter, I heard Madame Cailleau had thrown herself out of a window in a fit of despair.

And now I come to her whose dramatic career I have followed from beginning to end, to the most perfect actress ever possessed by the Opéra Comique, to Madame Dugazon. She had a natural talent which owed nothing, apparently, to study. Noble, naïve, graceful and piquant, she had twenty faces, and always suited her accent to the person she represented at the time; her voice was rather weak, but it did for tears,

laughter, and every situation equally well. Grétry and Delagrac worked for her, and were wild about her, and so was I also.

Madame Dugazon was a Royalist to the core, she gave a strong proof of that to the public at an advanced period of the Revolution. One evening as she was acting the soubrette in the "Evénements Imprévus," the Queen assisted at the representation, and in a duet where the valet begins by saying: "I love my master tenderly," Madame Dugazon, who had to reply: "Ah! how I love my mistress," turned towards the Queen's box, put her hand on her heart, and sang her reply in a feeling voice, bowing to the Queen. I have been told that later on the public—and what a public! wished to be revenged on her for this noble act, and endeavoured to make her sing some horrible song, which they delighted in, on the stage; Madame Dugazon would not yield, but left the theatre.

The length of this letter will show you, dear friend, how much I liked acting, for I have spared you few details.

Adieu.

LETTER IX.

Chantilly—Le Raincy—Madame de Montesson—The old Princess de Conti—Gennevilliers—Our Plays—The Marriage of Figaro—Beaumarchais—Monsieur and Madame de Villette—Moulin Joli—Watelet—M. de Morfontaine—The Marquis de Montesquiou—My Horoscope.

TO my great regret, I was unable to remain long in the country; but I often spent two or three days there at a time, and I had invitations to all the most beautiful places round Paris. I saw the Chantilly fêtes, organised by the Prince de Condé, who afterwards returned to France with Louis XVIII., and who knew so well how to do the honours of

those entertainments. You know the beautiful Château at Chantilly, the long gallery was adorned with armour of different epochs, some of it was so heavy and large that it might have done for giants; it was a splendid decoration for the abode of the descendants of the great Condé. At the end of the gallery was the cast of Henry IV., taken from his face after his death, to which still adhered some of the hair belonging to the eyebrows of the great King. I do not know what has become of this mask, which has been often reproduced in plaster; the armoury was pillaged in the Revolution, and a good deal of it found its way into museums.

In 1782, I stayed some time at Raincy. The Duc d'Orléans, father of Philippe Egalité, who then lived there, invited me to take his portrait and that of Madame de Montesson. With the exception of the large hunts which I enjoyed watching, I felt rather bored at Raincy; my sittings over, I had no congenial society except that of Madame Bertholet, a very pleasant

woman, who played well on the harp. Saint-Georges, the mulatto, was also amongst the sportsmen. I better understood, when there, the love most men, and especially princes, have for hunting; this amusement, when several people are congregated, makes a fine spectacle.

Whilst mentioning this visit, I cannot recall now without laughing a peculiarity of those days which at the time shocked me; whilst Madame de Montesson gave me a sitting, the old Princesse de Conti came one day to visit her, and this Princess, in speaking to me, called me always Miss. I was then expecting the birth of my daughter, which rendered this term still more curious. It is true that formerly all the great ladies spoke so to their inferiors, but this fashion had ceased with Louis XV.

If I did not enjoy my stay at Raincy much, I did when I was at Gennevilliers, which made up for it; this place then belonged to M. le Comte de Vaudreuil, a most charming person.

It was not a pretty place, and had been

bought on account of the Comte d'Artois, because of there being plenty of hunting near, and M. de Vaudreuil had embellished it wonderfully. The house was tastefully furnished, but without magnificence; there was a small theatre also, in which my sister-in-law's brother, M. de Rivière, and myself often acted comic operettas, along with Madame Dugazon, Garat, Cailleau, and Laruette. These two last had retired from the stage, but were admirable actors, and so natural, that when they were repeating the scene of the two fathers in "Rose and Colas," I believed they were talking together, and said: "Come, do begin the rehearsal."

M. le Comte d'Artois and his friends assisted at our plays. I confess that the sight of these great people made me very nervous, so that I refused to act the first time they came, but was persuaded to go on with my part through fear of disobliging my friends.

The last play acted in the theatre at Gennevilliers was a representation of the

"Mariage de Figaro," by the actors from the Comédie Française. I remember that Mademoiselle Sainval was the countess and Mademoiselle Olivier the page; Beaumarchais must have worried M. de Vaudreuil into permitting such a very doubtful play to be performed in this theatre. The dialogues, couplets, all were against the Court, of which most of the audience was composed, not to speak of the presence of our excellent Prince.

Every one felt this want of tact; but Beaumarchais was wild with delight. He rushed about like a madman, and on some one complaining of the heat, he did not give time for the windows to be opened, but broke all the panes with his cane, which annoyed everyone still more.

The Comte de Vaudreuil must have repented having accorded his protection to the author of the "Mariage de Figaro." In fact, shorty after this representation Beaumarchais requested an audience, which he obtained at once, and he came to Versailles at such an early hour that the

Count was barely out of bed. He then began to speak of some financial project which he had conceived, and which he said would work wonders; and then he wound up by proposing to give M. de Vaudreuil a considerable sum if he would undertake the guidance of the affair. "Monsieur de Beaumarchais," he replied, "you could not have arrived at a luckier time; for I have passed a good night, I have digested well, and never felt better in my life; had you come to me yesterday with such a proposition I should have thrown you out of window."

One of the prettiest country seats I have seen was Villette. The Marquise de Villette, surnamed Good and Beautiful, having begged me to go and visit them, I spent some days at that place; we came upon a man one day who was painting some railings in the lovely park, he was so expeditious that M. de Villette complimented him on it. "As for me," he replied, "I would undertake to efface in a day all that Rubens painted in his life."

Madame de Villette received very gracefully, and did well the honours of her house, she was very benevolent, and had a circular building in her park, where I was informed she collected the young village girls and instructed them just like a schoolmaster.

Ah! dear friend, how much I should have enjoyed walking with you in the woods of Moulin Joli which belonged to one of my acquaintances, a M. Watelet, a great friend of art and author of a poem on painting. M. Watelet was a distinguished man, with a kind disposition, which made him many friends. In his lonely retreat he seemed in harmony with all his surroundings; he entertained with ease and simplicity, and had a small but select circle of friends. He had living with him a friend to whom he had been attached for thirty years: time had hallowed their union, so to speak, so that they were received together in the best company as well as the lady's husband, who, strangely enough, never left her.

Monsieur de Calonne, who gave me so many things, as you know, was also sup-

posed to have given me Moulin Joli. Ah! had I possessed it I should, I believe, never have quitted it. My greatest regret, on the contrary, is that I did not buy it when on my return to France I found it was for sale: but a delay in the remittance of my money from Russia prevented my doing so. Moulin Joli was then sold for eighty thousand francs to a charcoal burner, who cut down all the trees and recouped himself thereby for the expense.

Some time before the Revolution I went to Morfontaine, and from thence we made an excursion to Ermonville, where I saw the tomb of J. J. Roussean. The notoriety of this fine park spoilt the excursion for me, at each turn so many inscriptions are noticed, that all one's ideas are destroyed.

M. de Morfontaine received with so much kindness and simplicity that everyone seemed at their ease with him. The Comte de Vaudreuil, Le Brun (the poet) the Chevalier de Coigny, Brougniart, Robert Rivière and

my brother acted charades every evening, and kept waking each other up to tell them; this mirth shows how much liberty was permitted in that place. In real truth, order was as much banished as restraint. Fortunately we were all intimate, and not a large party, for I never saw a château worse kept. At this time M. Le Pelletier de Morfontaine was provost of merchants; he built one of the bridges at Paris, I know not which one. I remember he often carried in a small packet a little slate, on which he wrote whatever he thought funny to remember to say to people. I often tried to read it over his shoulder, but although his letters were very big, I never could make out a word—his writing was so unformed, I defy his inheritors ever to participate in any souvenirs he may have left.

On leaving Morfontaine for Maupertuis, one could not keep comparing the difference between these two fine houses. At Maupertuis all was order and magnificence. M. de Montesquiou kept up all the state

of a great personage. As he was equerry to Monsieur and had been so since the death of Louis XV., it was easy for him to put carriages and horses at our disposal.

The mother and wife of M. de Montesquiou were very good to me. His sister-in-law, who afterwards became governess to the son of Napoleon, was kind, natural and very amiable. As for him, I have often seen him at Paris, and he struck me as being witty but cold; at Manpertuis he was not like the same man, when we were alone he read to us of an evening most charmingly.

I remember one evening when we were rather a small party, the Marquis de Montesquiou told us our fortunes. He foretold me that I should live long, and be an aimiable old lady because I was not a coquette. Now I have lived a long time, but am I an aimiable old lady? I doubt it; but at least I am a loving one, for I love you dearly.

Adieu.

LETTER X.

The Duc de Nivernais—The Maréchal de Noailles—His Speech to Louis XV.—Madame du Barri—Louveciennes—The Duc de Brissac—His Death—Death of Madame du Barri.

DEAR Friend, I dined several times at Saint-Ouen with the Duc de Nivernais, who had a fine place there, and who entertained a great deal. He was always renowned for the ease of his manner, and was distinguished by his extreme politeness towards women of all ages. It is very difficult now-a-days to give any idea of the urbanity and graceful ease of the manners of forty years ago,

which then were the great charm of Parisian society. This politeness of which I speak has totally disappeared. Women reigned then, the Revolution dethroned them.

The Duc de Nivernais was small and very thin. Although very old when I knew him, he was still full of vivacity. He was passionately fond of poetry, and made some very good verses.*

I dined often with the Maréchal de Noailles in his lovely château at the entrance to Saint Germain. He was very pleasant; his wit and gaiety communicated itself to all his guests, whom he selected from amongst the most distinguished literary characters and court celebrities.

The Maréchal de Noailles had an original and very piquant mind. He rarely resisted a desire to say something cutting; it was

* Louis-Jules-Barbon-Mancini Mazarini, Duc de Nivernais, died at the age of eighty-two. He succeeded Massillon at the Académie Française, and shortly after became a Member of the Academy of Inscriptions and Literature.

he who replied to Louis XV., when eating some olives out hunting, which he found bad: "They are from the bottom of the cask, Sire, no doubt."

This speech carries me back to a woman of whom I have not yet spoken, a woman who, though belonging to the lowest ranks of society, passed through a king's palace, and from thence to the scaffold, and whose sad end makes one forgive the scandal attached to her life.

It was in 1786 that I went for the first time to Louveciennes, where I had promised to take the portrait of Madame du Barri. I was extremely curious to see this favourite of whom I had so often heard. Madame du Barri must then have been about forty-five, she was tall, but not too much so, stout, with a full but beautiful figure; her face was still charming, with regular and pleasing features; her hair was fair and curly, like a child's, her complexion was the only part which was becoming withered.

She received me very gracefully, and

seemed to me to have good manners, but I found her mind more natural than her manners; her glances were those of a coquette, for her long eyes were never opened wide, and her pronunciation was childish, and did not agree well with her age. She gave me an apartment behind the weir at Marly, whose dismal noise worried me dreadfully. Underneath my apartment was a gallery, in which were placed, without any sort of order, busts, vases, columns, the rarest and most precious marbles, and quantities of other rare and valuable objects, all massed together in confusion, so that one might have believed oneself in the house of the mistress of several sovereigns, who had all enriched her with their gifts. These remains of magnificence contrasted strangely with the simplicity of attire adopted by the mistress of the house, both in her toilette and manner of living.

In summer as in winter Madame du Barri only wore white muslin or percale dressing-gowns, and every day, no matter what the weather was like, she walked in her park

or outside without feeling any ill effects, so much strengthened was she by her country life. She did not keep up any intercourse with the large court which had for so long surrounded her; the Portuguese Ambassadress, the beautiful Madame de Souza, and the Marquise de Brunoy were, I believe, the only women she saw, and during my three visits to her, at different times, I was able to satisfy myself that few people troubled her solitude.

I often met M. de Monville there, an amiable and very elegant person, who took us into a place called the desert, where the house only consisted of a tower. I do not know why the Ambassadors of Tippoo Saïb considered themselves obliged to visit the former mistress of Louis XV. Not only did they come to Louveciennes, but they brought presents to Madame du Barri, amongst others richly embroidered muslins. She gave me a splendid one with large detached flowers, in which both gold and colours were admirably blended.

In the evenings we were often alone,

seated by the fire, Madame du Barri and myself. She often talked to me about Louis XV. and his court, always with the greatest respect for the one and very cautiously about the other. But she avoided all details; it was evident that she preferred not to mention this subject, so that as a rule her conversation was rather flat. Otherwise she was a good woman both in words and action, she was very benevolent and succoured all the poor at Louveciennes. We often went together and visited some poor person, and I remember even now how rightly angry she was when at the bedside of a woman who had a baby and was in great want.

"What!" said Madame du Barri, "you have neither had linen, wine, or soup?" "Alas! nothing, Madame." As soon as we had returned to the château; Madame du Barri ordered up her housekeeper and the other servants who had not done what she had ordered, she was extremely angry with them and made them arrange a parcel of linen in her presence, and take it at once to the poor

woman with some broth and Bordeaux wine.

Every day we took our coffee after dinner in the Pavillion, so renowned for the taste and richness of its ornamentation. The first time I saw it, Madame du Barri said: "It was in this saloon that Louis XV. did me the honour to dine, above it there was a tribune for the musicians and singers who played and sang during the repast." It was a delightful saloon; the view was splendid, and the chimney-pieces and doors were of the most elaborate workmanship; the locks were master-pieces in their way, and the furniture was of a richness and elegance beyond description.

It was no longer Louis XV. who reclined on the magnificent couches, it was the Duc de Brissac, and we have often left him there for he was fond of his siesta. The Duc de Brissac lived altogether at Louveciennes; but nothing, either in his manners or those of Madame du Barri would have caused anyone to suppose that he was more than the friend of the mistress of the house. It was

easy to see though that a tender affection united these two, and perhaps this attachment cost them their lives. When, before the Terror, Madame du Barri went to England to seek for her stolen diamonds, which she found there, the English had received her cordially and did their utmost to prevent her returning to France; in fact at the last her friends unharnessed her post-horses to make her stay; it was only her desire to join the Duc de Brissac who she had left concealed at Louveciennes, which made her resist the instances of her friends to keep her in London, where she might have lived in ease from the sale of her diamonds. Unfortunately for her she quitted England, and rejoined the Duc de Brissac at Louveciennes. Shortly after, the duke was arrested before her eyes, and taken to prison at Orleans. From thence they fetched him and three others, to lead to Versailles, as they said; all four were put in a tumbril and had barely got half way there when they were shamefully massacred!

The bleeding head of the Duc de Brissac was carried to Madame du Barri. You can imagine what that unhappy woman must have felt at the sight! It was not long before she experienced the same fate, reserved for everybody who possessed any fortune or a great name. She was betrayed and denounced by a little negro, called Zamore, of whom mention is made in the memoirs of those times, as having been most kindly treated both by her and by Louis XV. Arrested and imprisoned, Madame du Barri was judged and condemned to death by the revolutionary tribunal at the end of 1793. She is the only woman, amongst the numbers of women who perished in those days, who was unable to face the scaffold; she wept, she implored mercy from the horrible crowd which surrounded her, and that crowd was so affected by her entreaties that the executioner hastened to put an end to her agony. I am convinced that had the victims of that awful time not died so courageously, the Terror would have ceased much sooner.

Men whose intellects are not fully developed have too little imagination to feel touched by internal suffering, and the pity of the populace is more easily aroused than its admiration.

I made three portraits of Madame du Barri. In the first place I represented her in a peignoir, with a straw hat; in the second she is robed in white satin, holding a crown in one hand and with one arm resting on a pedestal. I painted this picture very carefully; it was destined for the Duc de Brissac, as was the other also, and I have seen it recently. The old general to whom it belonged had the head touched up, for it is not like the one I did; this one is rouged up to the eyes, and Madame du Barri never wore any at all. I renounce therefore any connection with this head, which is not mine; the rest of the painting is intact and well preserved. It was sold at the death of the above named general.

The third portrait I made of Madame du Barri is in my own house, I commenced it towards the end of 1789. We heard con-

tinual cannonading at Louveciennes, and I remember the poor woman saying: "Had Louis XV. been alive, surely this would not have happened." I had painted the head and traced out the bust and arms, when I was obliged to return to Paris; I hoped to be able to go back again to Louveciennes and finish my work; but Berthier and Foulon had just been assassinated. My terror was very great and I only thought of how to leave France; I therefore left this picture unfinished. I do not know by what chance M. le Comte Louis de Narbonne became the possessor during my absence; on my return to France he restored it to me, and I have just completed it.*

The sad contents of this letter warn me that I have arrived at a period of my existence of which I could wish to lose all knowledge and all memory, had I not promised you a sincere and complete recital

* We do not know the name of the present proprietor of this portrait, but we know that Madame Tripier Le Franc has made a very beautiful copy.

of my life; no more gaiety, Greek suppers, or comedies, but days of anguish and fear, which I shall relate in my next letters.

Adieu, dear friend.

LETTER XI.

Romainville—Maréchal de Ségur—Malmaison—Madame le Couteux-du-Moley—Abbé Sièyes—Madame Augnier—Madame Campan—Madame Rousseau—The first Dauphin.

I CANNOT recall the last visits I made without some unpleasant memories mingling with those of happier moments: in 1788, for instance, I went with Robert to spend a few days at Romainville, with the Maréchal de Ségur. During our journey we noticed that the peasants no longer took off their hats, on the contrary, they looked sullenly at us, and some even menaced us with their

sticks. When we reached our destination we were witnesses of a most terrible storm. The sky was yellow, tinted with dark grey, and when these fearful clouds broke there burst forth sheets of lightning, and heavy thunder, accompanied by such enormous hail stones, that the environs of Paris were ravaged for forty leagues round. Madame de Ségur and myself gazed at each other with shuddering during this storm; we seemed to foresee that gloomy day, the evils of which without being fortune-tellers could be easily foretold.

The evening and the next day we all went with the Maréchal to behold the ravages made by the storm. Wheat, vines and fruit trees had been completely destroyed. The peasants were weeping and wringing their hands. Everyone did their utmost to succour these unfortunate creatures; the larger landowners gave away sums of money—one very rich man distributed forty thousand francs amongst the sufferers; to the shame of humanity, be it said, that he was one of the first

who were massacred by the bloodthirsty revolutionists.

I spent a fortnight at Malmaison during that summer of 1788, it then belonged to the Comtesse du Moley, a pretty fashionable woman not particularly clever herself, but who appreciated wit in others. Comte Olivarès was living with her at the time, and she had had an inscription placed for him at the beginning of a road, leading to the top of the park, with "Sierra Morena" written on it. Olivarès was not exactly a pleasant person. The most striking part about him was his dirt; his pockets were full of Spanish tobacco, and he used them instead of a snuff-box.

The Duc de Crillon and dear Abbé Delille came often to Malmaison. Madame du Moley was very fond of solitary walks, and my taste agreed with hers; so that we had arranged that we would carry a branch of green stuff in our hands if we did not wish to speak to each other, or to meet. I never walked without my

branch, but I quickly threw it away when I perceived the Abbé Delille.

In June, 1719, I was dining at Malmaison, and met the Abbé Sièyes and several other partisans of the Revolution. M. du Moley ranted against the aristocracy; everybody yelled and declaimed on different topics, enough to have created a general disturbance; it was like a revolutionary club, and these conversations made me very uncomfortable. After dinner Abbé Sièyes observed to someone, I forget who: "I really believe we shall go too far." "They will go so far that they will lose their way," said I, to Madame du Moley, who had heard what the Abbé had said, and felt distressed at such sinister forebodings.

About the same time I went to spend a few days at Marly with Madame Auguier, a sister of Madame Campan, and attached to the Queen's household like herself. She had a château and fine park near the weir. One day as we were standing at a window looking on to the court, and from

thence to the high road, we saw a drunken man enter and fall down, Madame Auguier, with her usual kindness, called to her husband's valet and told him to pick up this unfortunate creature, take him to the kitchen and look after him. Soon after the valet returned. "Madame is really too kind," said he, "this man is a miscreant! here are the papers he let fall from his pocket." And he placed in our hands several documents, of which one began with: "Down with the Royal Family! down with the nobles and priests!" then followed revolutionary litanies and thousands of atrocious prophecies, drawn up in language which made one's hair stand on end. Madame Auguier had the village guards called up, four of these soldiers came; she desired them to take this man away and find out more about him; they led him off, but the valet, who followed them for some distance, without their knowledge, saw them, as soon as they were out of sight, take their prisoner by the arm and jump, sing and dance with him as though

they were the best of friends. This terrified us; what was to become of us if the civil guard even lent itself to the cause of the wicked?

I advised Madame Auguier to show these papers to the Queen, and a few days after, being on duty again, she read them to Her Majesty, who returned them, saying: "It is impossible that they should meditate such wickedness, I shall never believe them capable of it!"

Alas! subsequent events have shown the fallacy of this noble doubt; and, not to speak of the august victim who would not believe in such horrors, poor Madame Auguier herself was destined to pay for her devotion with her life.

This devotion never wavered. In the worst times of the Revolution, knowing the Queen was without money, she insisted on lending her twenty-five louis. The revolutionists heard of it and went to the Tuileries to take her to prison, or in other words to the guillotine. When she beheld them coming furiously to-

wards her with menaces on their lips, Madame Auguier preferred a speedy death to the agony of falling into their hands; she threw herself out of the window and was killed.

I have known few women more beautiful or pleasing than was Madame Auguier. She was tall and well made; she had a fresh face with a pink and white complexion, and lovely eyes full of sweetness and goodness. She left two daughters, whom I have known since they were children at Marly. One married Marshal Ney; the second M. Debroc. This last one died very young and very unfortunately; as she was travelling with Madame Louis Bonaparte, an intimate friend, she wished in an excursion to Ancenis to cross a deep crevice on a plank; the plank gave way, and the poor thing was killed in the chasm.

Madame Auguier had two sisters; one was the Madame Campan, well known as first lady in waiting to the Queen, and the clever directress of the educational estab-

lishment at St. Germain, where all the celebrities of the Empire had their daughters educated. I knew Madame Campan at Versailles, when she enjoyed the greatest favour and confidence of the Queen. I never doubted but what she would ever feel grateful to her august mistress for her kindness, when, during my sojourn at St. Petersburg, you must remember that one evening I heard her accused of having abandoned and betrayed the Queen. I stood up warmly for her against this calumnious report, and repeatedly said that it could not be true. Two years after, on my return to France, I received a few days after my arrival the following letter from Madame Campan, which I copy so that you may be made aware of what I consider to be a very truthful justification.

"Saint Germain,

"This 27th of January, old style.

"You said when far away from me, dear lady, 'It could not be true!' Goodness, sense, and kindness formed your opinion; and

these rare qualities, rare in our days are happily for me united with still rarer talents in yourself, I feel deeply your kind speech on my behalf. How, indeed, could you believe that I should ever waver an instant in my sentiments, opinions, and devotion from the unfortunate being who did her utmost for my happiness and that of my family? I have had, on the contrary, the pleasure of giving her proofs of a gratitude which she had a right to expect. My poor sister Auguier and myself, although I was not on service, faced death rather than quit her that ever memorable and terrible night of the 10th of August. Saved from this massacre, but hiding and dying of fear in different houses in Paris, we gathered strength enough to reach the Feuillants, and be with her again in her first detention at the Assemblée. Pétion alone parted us from her, when we wished to follow her to the Tuileries. After such true and natural acts, for which I take no praise to myself, how, will you say, could anyone be so strangely calumniated? Was I not

to be made to pay dear for the marked and prolonged favour of so many years? Is favour ever forgiven in a court, even when it falls upon a servant? They wished to make the Queen think badly of me, that was all. They will not succeed, for some day people will know how much she trusted and confided in me in most important matters. I must nevertheless affirm, so as not to be misunderstood, my real feelings as regarded the plan of emigration which I considered as fatal to the emigrants, but even more so, in my ideas at that time, to the welfare of Louis XVI. Whilst living in the Tuileries I was struck by this fact, that there was only a quarter of a league from that palace to the insurgent faubourgs, and a hundred leagues from Coblentz or the protecting armies. Women are by nature talkative, and I stated too often and too openly my opinion of this plan which in those days was the hope of everybody. A very different sentiment from the criminal and foolish wish, for a fearful resolution dictated my fears. Time has only too well justified

them; and the countless victims of that project ought not to impute as a crime to me what I said at the time.

"But now I am living in another sphere; I have given myself up completely to my work, with a peaceful and untroubled conscience. I have long wished you to see my method of education, to receive and welcome you as a sincere and precious friend. Come one day with the interesting and unfortunate Rousseau, and it will be a joyful day for me. Believe in my esteem, gratitude and affection, ever your friend

"GENET CAMPAN."

Madame Auguier had another sister, besides Madame Campan, called Rousseau, a very agreeable woman who the Queen had placed in the household of the first Dauphin and who often entertained us during my court sittings. Madame Rousseau left a son, known under the name of Amédée de Beauplan, a very good musician. Madame Rousseau was so dear to the young prince, that the charming child said to her two days

before his death, "I love thee so much, Rousseau, that I shall still love thee after I am dead."

Madame Rousseau's husband was fencing master to the Enfants de France, being as it were doubly attached to the Royal Family, he could not escape death; he was taken prisoner and guillotined. I have heard that when the sentence was passed, the judge had the atrocity to call out: "Fence that, Rousseau, if you can!"

Whilst relating these horrors, I am encroaching on the space I have left to tell you of my life up to the day I left France. I shall resume in my next letter the account of the sad events which caused me to flee from my country, and seek for safety in foreign lands. Adieu, dear friend.

LETTER XII.

1789—I take refuge with Brongniart—MM. de Sombreuil—Pamela—The 5th of October—The Royal Family are taken from Versailles—I leave Paris—My Companions in the diligence—I cross the mountains.

THE dreadful year of 1789 began, and fear had taken hold of the wisest amongst us. I remember one evening having invited some friends for a concert, and they arrived with consternation depicted on their faces; they had been that morning to Longchamps; the populace, assembled at the Barrière de l'Etoile, had abused them horribly, especially those who were driving—some wretches sprang on to

the carriage steps calling out: "Next year you will be behind your carriages, and we shall be inside!" and many other still worse speeches; these incidents cast a gloom over my party, as you can suppose—the person least terrified was Madame de Villette, Voltaire's beauty. As for me, I had no occasion to be told of fresh details on the horrors which were being prepared, I knew well that my house, Rue du Gros Chenet, where I had not lived for more than three months, was marked by the miscreants. They threw sulphur into our cellars through the gratings. If I stood at the window, brutal sansculottes shook their fists at me. I heard all sorts of sinister rumours on every side; and lived in a continual state of anxiety and despair.

My health suffered so much, that two good friends, Brongniart, the architect, and his wife, when they came to see me found me looking so ill and thin that they implored me to come and spend a few days with them, which offer I accepted with gratitude. Brongniart lodged in the Invalides; I was

taken there by a doctor attached to the Palais Royal, whose servants wore the Orleans livery, the only one respected in those days. They gave me the best bed. As I could not eat anything, they fed me with excellent Bordeaux wine and soup, and Madame Brongniart never left me. So much care ought to have done me good, seeing too that my friends did not think as badly of affairs as I did; but they could not reassure me against the evils I foresaw. What was the use of living? or of taking care of oneself? said I often to my friends, for terror of the future made me take a disgust to life, and yet my liveliest imagination never went as far as the reality; afterwards I remember having supper with Brongniart and the excellent M. de Sombreuil, then Governor of the Invalides, being one of the guests. He told us that they were coming to take possession of the arms at the depôt, but added that he had hidden them so well that he defied them to discover them. The worthy man did not know that the only person to be relied on was oneself. As the arms were

taken away, he was of course betrayed by one of the inmates of the establishment which he had employed.

M. de Sombreuil, as much respected for his moral qualities as for his military talents, was amongst the number of prisoners massacred in the prisons on the 2nd of September. The assassins spared his life owing to the tears and supplications of his heroic daughter, but atrocious even in their mercy they forced Mademoiselle de Sombreuil to drink a glass of the blood that was flowing in the prison; and for long afterwards the sight of anything red would make the unfortunate girl retch dreadfully! Later on in 1794, M. de Sombreuil was sent to the scaffold by the revolutionary tribunal. These two circumstances inspired the poet Legouvé with the finest of his verses

"Des bourreaux l'ont absous, des juges l'ont frappé."

M. de Sombreuil left a son, distinguished for his gallantry and character. He commanded one of the English regiments at Quiberon in 1795. The National Conven-

tion having violated the capitulation signed by General Hoche, M. de Sombreuil received death like a brave man; he would not allow his eyes to be bandaged and gave the order to fire. Tallien at the time of execution, said to him: "Monsieur, you belong to an unlucky family." "I had intended to avenge them," replied M. de Sombreuil, "but I can only follow their example."

Madame Brongniart took me to walk behind the Invalides; some masons were standing near. As we were sitting down against one of these walls, we heard two men talking amongst them who could not see us. "Will you earn ten francs?" said one, "come with us, you will only have to shout: Down with this one! or that! and especially to shout against Cayonne." "Ten francs are worth having," replied the other, "but should we get no blows ourselves?" "Get away!" retorted the first, "we should be the ones to give them." You may imagine the effect of such a dialogue on me!

The day after the one I speak of, we were passing before the grating of the

Invalides where a large crowd was assembled of the hideous creatures who haunted the galleries of the Palais Royal; all people of no profession, in rags and tatters, neither workmen or peasants, no name could be given them unless it were that of bandits, so terrifying were their faces. Madame Brongniart who was more courageous than myself, sought to reassure me; but I was so frightened that I turned back to the house, when we saw in the distance a young woman on horseback, in a riding habit and hat with long black feathers. Immediately the crowd parted and made way for her, she was followed by two grooms in the Orleans livery. I at once recognised the lovely Pamela, who had been introduced to me by Madame de Genlis. She was in the zenith of her beauty and was really exquisite; we heard the band of ruffians shout: "There is the one we must have for our queen!" Pamela kept pacing to and fro amongst this disgusting crowd which saddened me much. She afterwards married Lord Fitzgerald, who is now dead; she is still living but is much altered.

Shortly after I returned to my home, but I could not live there. Society was at a standstill, and honest folks had no support; for the National Guard was so curiously composed, that the spectacle it afforded was as strange as it was horrible. Fear seemed to cast a gloom over all; I have noticed since, that the generation born during the revolution is much less robust than the one preceding: how many sickly and suffering children must have been brought into the world during that sad time!

M. de Rivière, chargé-d'affaires to the Saxon court, whose daughter married my brother, offered me his hospitality, and I spent at least two weeks with him. It was there the busts of the Duc d'Orléans and M. Necker were brought, followed by an immense crowd, loudly proclaiming that one should be their king and the other their protector. The evening these *honest folks* came, they set fire to the barrière which was at the end of the Rue Chaussée d'Antin, where we lived, and then they

unpaved the streets and set up barricades, shouting "Here are the enemy." The enemy never came; alas! they were in Paris.

Although M. de Rivière treated me as one of his own children, and I believed myself to be safe under his protection, since he was a Minister of Foreign Affairs, I had quite decided on leaving France. I had long desired to go to Rome. The number of portraits I had undertaken had alone prevented my doing so before; but if ever the time for my departure was to come it had come then, I could no longer paint! my imagination was so dazed by the horrors I saw that it ceased to influence my art: and, besides, wicked libels were showered on my friends and on myself, alas! and although, thank God! I had done harm to no one, I was in the place of the man who said: "I am accused of having taken away the towers of Notre Dame; they are in their places; but go I must, for it is plain I have given offence somehow."

I left several unfinished portraits, amongst

others, that of Mademoiselle Contat; I refused to paint Mademoiselle de Laborde, afterwards Duchesse de Noailles, whose father desired her portrait, she was barely sixteen and very lovely; but it was no longer a question of success or fortune, it was a question of saving one's head. Therefore I had my carriage packed, and had my passport for leaving the next day with my daughter and her governess, when my room was entered by a number of armed National Guards, most of them drunk, and with dreadful countenances. Some came up to me and spoke in coarse language, and said "You shall not leave, citoyenne, you shall not leave;" at last they departed. I was left in a most miserable condition, when I saw two return whose faces did not terrify me; although they were of the band, I soon perceived they meant no harm. "Madame," said one, "we are your neighbours, we advise you to leave as quickly as possible. You cannot live here, you are so altered that we are quite concerned for you. But do

not leave in your carriage; go by the diligence, it is much safer."

I thanked them heartily, and followed their good advice. I engaged three places, as I wished to take my daughter, then five or six years old; but I could not get my places for a fortnight, as all who emigrated like myself went in the diligence.

I was so altered that, the eve of my departure, having gone to see my mother to wish her goodbye, she only recognised me from my voice; yet it was only three weeks since we had met.

At last the welcome day arrived, it was the 5th of October; the King and Queen were brought from Versailles to Paris amidst pikes! my brother witnessed the arrival of their Majesties at the Hôtel de Ville; he heard M. Bailly's discourse, and as he knew I was to leave that evening he came to see me about ten o'clock. Never, said he, had the Queen looked more majestic than to-day, when she entered amidst these demons. Then he told me the beautiful answer she had made to M. Bailly, "I know

all, I have seen all, and I forgive all." The events of that day caused me great anxiety on account of their Majesties and for all decent people, so that at midnight I was dragged to the diligence in a most miserable state of mind. I feared passing the Faubourg St Antoine, which I was forced to do, to reach the Barrière du Trone. My brother Robert and my husband accompanied me to the barrière, and never left the diligence. This faubourg, of which we were so fearful, was perfectly quiet, all its inhabitants, workmen and others had been to Versailles to fetch the Royal Family, and the fatigue of the journey had made them sleepy.

I had in front of me in the diligence a very dirty and odoriferous man, who quietly informed me he had stolen several watches and other objects. Fortunately, he saw nothing on me likely to tempt him; for I took but little linen with me, and eighty louis for my journey. I left all my trinkets at Paris, and the proceeds of my labours was in my husband's possession, who, as I

have said before, spent it all. I lived, whilst abroad, on the portraits I took. Far from M. Le Brun ever sending me money, he wrote me most dismal letters on his poverty, so that I once sent him a thousand écus, and another time a hundred louis, besides sending equal sums to my mother.

The thief, not content with relating his robberies, spoke continually about hanging such and such people, naming several of my acquaintances. My little girl thought him very wicked, and was much afraid of him, which gave me courage to say: "I pray you, Sir, do not speak of murder before this child!" He was silenced, and amused himself by playing with her. There was, besides this man, on the banquette where I was sitting another, a furious Jacobin from Grenoble, about fifty; ugly, with a bilious complexion, who, each time we descended for dinner or supper at an inn, began to declaim in a most terrible manner. In all the towns, crowds stopped the diligence to learn news of Paris. Our Jacobin then called out: "Be quiet, my children; we

have the Baker and his wife safe in Paris; they will be forced to accept a constitution, and all will be well!" The people believed in this man as an oracle. I no longer feared for myself, but for everybody—my mother, brother, and friends; I trembled also for their Majesties. All along the road till Lyons, men on horseback approached the diligence to tell us the King and Queen were massacred, and Paris was on fire. My poor little girl trembled all over; she believed her father was killed, and our house burnt down, and when I had succeeded in calming her, there came another horseman with the same tales.

At last we reached Lyons. I went to M. Artaut, a merchant, whom I had entertained at Paris, with his wife. I was not well acquainted with them, but they had inspired me with confidence, because our opinions agreed perfectly on all that was passing at the time. My first thought was to ask them if it were true the King and Queen had been massacred, and, thank Heaven! for once I was reassured.

Monsieur and Madame Artaut found some difficulty in recognising me at first, not only because I was so altered, but because I wore the dress of a badly-dressed workwoman, with a large handkerchief falling over my eyes. I had had occasion to be thankful I had taken this precaution on my journey. I had exhibited at the *salon* the portrait representing myself with my child in my arms. I had done this for M. d'Angevilliers. But it had been taken from him during the emigrations and carried to the Ministère de l'Intérieur. The Grenoble Jacobin spoke of the exhibition, and praised this same picture. I trembled lest he should recognise me, and did my best to hide my face. Thanks to that and my dress, I escaped unnoticed.

I spent three days at Lyons with the Artauts. I had need of the rest, but with the exception of my hosts, I saw no one in the town, as I desired to remain in strict *incognito*. M. Arnaut engaged a driver for me, and told him I was a relation of his. He put me under the charge of this nice man, who took the greatest care of both my

daughter and myself. I cannot tell you what I felt when we crossed the Bridge of Beauvoisin. Then, and then only, I began to breathe freely. I was out of France—of France, my country—which I reproached myself with quitting with so much joy. The sight of the mountains distracted me from my sad thoughts. I had never seen high ones before. Those of Savoy seemed to reach the sky. My first feeling was one of awe, but I insensibly became accustomed to this spectacle and ended by admiring it.

The landscape at Echelles delighted me. I imagined myself in the Titans' Gallery, and thus I have always called it. Wishing to enjoy these beauties more thoroughly, I descended from the carriage, but about half way on the road I was much alarmed, for they were blasting some rocks, and the result was like the report of thousands of canons reverberating from rock to rock with a terrible sound.

I ascended the Mont Cenis, along with several other strangers. A postillion came up. "Madame ought to take a mule," said

he, "for a lady like herself." I told him I was a workwoman, accustomed to walking. "Ah!" replied he, laughing, "Madame is not a workwoman; I know who she is." "And who am I, then?" "You are Madame Le Brun, who paints beautifully, and we are very glad to know you are safe away from wicked people." I never could guess how this man managed to know my name, but that has proved to me how many emissaries the Jacobins must have employed. Happily, I no longer feared them; I was out of their dreadful clutches. For want of my country I was going to inhabit places where peace and the arts flourished. I was going to visit Rome, Naples, Berlin, Vienna, and St. Petersburg, and, above all, I was going, unknown to myself, to meet you, dear friend, to know you and to love you.

Always yours.

SOUVENIRS.

CHAPTER I.

Turin—Porporati—Correggio—Parma—M. de Flavigny—The Churches—The Infant of Parma—Modena—Bologna—Florence.

AFTER having crossed the Mont Cenis, I reached Turin, tired in body and mind, for a drenching rain had prevented my getting out of the carriage to walk a little, and I know nothing more annoying than being driven slowly along. At last my conductor deposited me in a very bad inn. It was nine at night; we were dying of hunger,

but as nothing was to be had in the house, my daughter, her governess and myself were obliged to go supperless to bed.

The next day, very early, I acquainted Porporati of my arrival; his beautiful engravings are well known. He was then a professor at Turin. I had seen a good deal of him when in Paris, and he came at once to visit me. Finding me so uncomfortable in my inn, he begged me to stay at his house, which I dared not do at first, but he implored me so eagerly and frankly that I gave way, and allowing my packages to be carried to his domicile I followed soon after with my child. I was received by his daughter, aged eighteen, who lived with him also, and both were unremitting in their attention to us during the five or six days we passed in their house. Being anxious to reach Rome, I did not see many people at Turin. I contented myself with visiting the city, and making a few excursions. The town is handsome; all the streets run parallel, and

the houses are regularly built. A high mountain arises close behind, called La Superga, the burial place of the Kings of Sardinia.

Porporati took me to the theatre. We went to the largest, and there I perceived in the front boxes the Duc de Bourbon and the Duc d'Enghien, whom I had not seen for some time. The father looked so young that he might have been the brother of his son.

The music pleased me extremely, and I asked Porporati if his city contained many lovers of art; he shook his head and said: "They know nothing about it, this is what happened to me; a very great man, having heard that I was an engraver, came to me quite recently and wanted me to engrave his seal."

This little anecdote convinced me that the inhabitants of Turin had no very great knowledge of art either.

I left my kind hosts for Parma; I had barely arrived there when I received a visit from the Comte de Flavigny, staying there as a Minister of Louis XVI. M.

de Flavigny was about sixty—I had not met him in France before; but his extreme courtesy and willingness to do me service made me soon know and appreciate him, his wife also made much of my daughter and myself, their society was a great resource for me in a town where I knew nobody.

M. de Flavigny made me see everything of any importance in Parma. After having contemplated the magnificent painting by Correggio of the Nativity which we have had in the Museum of the Louvre, I visited the churches where the works of this great master are the finest ornament. I could not behold so many divine paintings without believing in the inspiration which the Christian artist draws from his religion; no doubt fables have charming fictions, but the poetry of Christianity to me is far more beautiful.

I went to the summit of the church of Saint-Jean; there I was able to admire more closely a cupola where Correggio painted several angels, surrounded by

feathery clouds. What surprised me was that the faces are so exquisitely finished, they might have been standing on a painter's easel, and yet it does not detract from the view of the cupola seen from below. M. le Comte de Flavigny presented me to the Infanta, sister to Marie Antoinette, much older than our Queen, of whom she had neither the beauty or the grace. She was in deep mourning for her brother, the Emperor Joseph II. Her apartments being all hung with black she looked to me like a ghost, all the more so because she was extremely thin and very pale.

This princess rode on horseback every day. Her manners and way of living were like those of a man. In fact I was not charmed with her, although she received me very graciously.

I did not remain long at Parma, the season was advancing and I had to cross the Bolognese mountains. I was therefore in a hurry to begin my journey, but the kind M. de Flavigny made me adjourn my departure for three days, because he was

expecting a friend whom he wished to take charge of me, not wanting me to cross the mountains alone with my daugher and her governess. This friend, M. le Vicomte de Lespignière, arrived; and I was entrusted to him, his carriage followed mine so that I travelled most safely as far as Rome.

I stopped but little at Modena, a pretty town which looked nice to live in. The streets are lined with long arcades which shelter the foot passengers from rain and sunshine. The palace looked elegant and majestic. It contains several fine paintings, one by Raffaelle and many by Giulio Romano.

After having crossed the mountains which are very terrifying, for the road is narrow, steep and précipitous, causing me thereby to walk a good deal, we reached Bologna, feeling rather tired. My wish was to spend at least a week in this town, in order to admire the master-pieces of its school, generally considered one of the first in Italy. Therefore I hastened to unpack my luggage. "Alas! Madame," said the

innkeeper, "you are taking needless trouble, for, being French, you can only spend one night here."

I was in despair, all the more because I saw coming towards me a tall black man, dressed like Bartholo, whom I at once took to be a messenger of the Papal Government. He held a paper in his hand, which I at once imagined was the order for my quitting the town in twenty-four hours. "I know what you have come to say, Signor," said I sorrowfully, "you have brought me the order to leave." "No, I come, on the contrary, to bring you the permission to remain here as long as you please, Madame," he replied.

My joy on this good news was great, and I hastened to benefit by this favour. It was plain that the Papal Government was informed from Turin of the names of all the French travellers who wished to cross the Papal States.

I visited several of the palaces which contain master-pieces of the Bolognese school, in one of these the *custode* followed me round and persisted in telling me the

names of all the painters. He irritated me much, and I quietly told him he was giving himself needless trouble, for I knew all these masters. He contented himself after that with accompanying me; but as he heard me admiring the finest works and repeating the painter's name, he left me and went to my servant and said: "Who is this lady? I have led many great princesses through this gallery, but I never met any as well informed as this one is." Three days after my arrival, the 3rd of November, 1789, I was received as member of the Academy of Bologna. M. Bequetti, who was the director, came himself to bring my letters of acceptation.

I consoled myself for leaving so many beautiful things by the idea of those which I should find in Florence. After having crossed the Apennines and the arid hills of Radicofani, we passed through a fertile country which is at the outskirts of Tuscany. On the right of the road a little volcano was pointed out to me, which bursts out on the approach of a light, called Fuoco

di Lagno. Further on the road ascended, and I saw Florence situated at the bottom of a large valley, which at first looked rather gloomy, for I like towns built on a height; but as soon as I entered the illustrious city, I was surprised and delighted with its beauty and view.

After having installed myself in the hotel to which I had been recommended, I commenced by taking a walk with my daughter and the Marquis de Lespignière on one of the surrounding hills, from whence there is a magnificent prospect, and several cypress trees growing around. My daughter looking at them said: "These trees seem to ask one to be silent." I was so surprised at a child of seven saying such a thing, that I have never forgotten it.

Notwithstanding my extreme haste to get to Rome, I felt obliged to remain some little time in this city. I visited the celebrated gallery which the Medicis enriched with so much care; but I should require a volume to enter into details on all the riches I had

the pleasure of beholding in this place of enchantment for artists.

Of course I could not leave Florence without seeing the Altoviti Palace, where Raffaelle's fine portrait by himself is kept. This portrait has been put under glass, in order to preserve it, and this precaution has darkened the shadows, but all the flesh tints are very pure and delicately coloured. The features of the portrait are very regular, good eyes and a clear, penetrating expression.

I did not neglect to visit the Mediciean Library, which contains very rare manuscripts. There are some old missals whose left margins are exquisitely painted; holy subjects are done in miniature in colours and admirably finished.

The day I visited the gallery containing the portraits of modern painters by themselves, I was honoured by being asked for mine for the City of Florence, and I promised to send it when in Rome.* I saw with great satis-

* Madame Vigée Le Brun kept her promise. Her portrait is in the portrait-room of painters, under No. 360.

faction in this gallery the picture of Angelica Kauffmann, who is one of the greatest honours to our sex.

All the time of my sojourn at Florence was one of enchantment. I had made the acquaintance of a French lady, the Marquise de Venturi, who treated me with much kindness. In the evenings she accompanied me along the banks of the Arno, where, at a certain hour, heaps of carriages and elegantly dressed people were to be seen, whose presence enlivened the charming spot. These promenades and my mornings at the Medici Gallery, and to the churches and palaces of the city, caused my days to pass most agreeably; and had I not thought of my poor France, I should then have been a most happy woman.

CHAPTER II.

Rome — Drouais—Raffaelle — The Coliseum—Angelica Kauffmann—Cardinal Bernis—Roman Customs—My Movements.

SHORTLY after my arrival in Rome I wrote the following letter to Robert, the landscape painter:

"Rome, December 1st, 1789.

"It was with sorrow, my dear friend, that I left the lovely city of Florence, where I saw very rapidly all the most remarkable works of art, and which I promised myself to visit more leisurely on my return from Rome.

"You have noticed my huge sighs when I heard the conversations of those who

had had the happiness of living here; you know how much I desired to visit in my turn this beautiful land of art. When, at some distance from Rome, I beheld the dome of St. Peter's, it would be impossible for me to describe my intense joy. At last I crossed the Ponte Molle, and I must confess that I thought it rather small, and the Tiber a very dirty stream; I crossed the Porta del Popolo and Corso, and finally reached the Académie de France. Our director, M. Ménageot, came to the carriage door; I asked him to put us up till I had found some other lodging, and he at once gave me a small apartment, with my daughter and governess close by. Moreover, he lent me ten louis that I might be able to finish paying my driver; for I must tell you that I only brought eighty louis with me, my dear husband having kept the rest for himself, as you know was his custom.

"The same day M. Ménageot took me to Saint Peter's, its immense size did not strike me all at once. I attribute

this effect to the beautiful proportion of its details.

"The next day I visited the Vatican Museum. It is to the Greeks that we must ascribe, in its greatest perfection, the elegance of forms; in seeing their works it is evident that they had admirable models, and that the men and women of ancient Greece must have realised of old what we consider our beau ideal of beauty. As I was setting out on my way to the Museum, I received a visit from the pupils of the Academy. They brought me young Drouais' palette and asked me in exchange for some of the brushes I used whilst painting; I cannot conceal how much affected I was by this flattering demand, and the honour paid to me; I shall ever remember it with pleasure.

"The galleries, salons and corridors of the Vatican are quite unique in the world. It is astonishing to behold the numerous works of Raffaelle, when one sees the wonderful Athenian School, and then the Fire of Borgo, composed in such a different style.

But what surprises me more than everything is, that he who died so young should have left so many master-pieces.

"It is a great misfortune that so many beautiful productions are being destroyed, not only by time, but because young artists are permitted to trace over the heads with chalks. I remember on this subject hearing a former director of the Academy say to his pupils: 'What need have you to trace out the heads by Raffaelle? do them from nature, morbleu! it is the same thing; go on to the Piazza del Popolo.'

"I went to the Coliseum, this ruin is truly beautiful; the colour of the stone and the vegetation growing around make a lovely pictorial effect. I cannot imagine what possessed you to climb to the very top of everything for the mere pleasure of planting a cross there, it was a dangerous exploit? I must not forget to tell you that this cross has remained where you placed it, and your skill and courage are become historical, for they are still the talk of Rome.

"I have seen Angelica Kauffmann, whom I had long wished to know. I found her very interesting, apart from her great talent, by her wit and intellectual powers. She is a woman of about fifty, very delicate, her health was destroyed by her misfortune in marrying an adventurer, who ruined her. She married after his death an architect, who is also her man of business; she talked to me for some time, and very well, during the two evenings I passed with her. Her conversation is very gentle; she is very well informed, but totally devoid of enthusiasm. Angelica possesses some paintings by the great masters, I saw several of her own works; her sketches pleased me more than her pictures, because their colouring is like that of Titian.

"I dined with her yesterday at our Ambassador's, the Cardinal de Bernis, whom I had visited three days after my arrival. He placed us both at table by his side. He had invited several strangers, and some of the Diplomatic Corps, so that we were thirty at the dinner, the Cardinal doing

the honours most gracefully, although for himself he never eat more than two little dishes of vegetables. But the curious part was yet to come; this morning I was awoke at seven, and the family of the Cardinal de Bernis was announced. I was astonished! I arose in great haste and they entered, this family consisted of five great big footmen in livery, who came to demand a *buono mano*. I was informed that they came for some drink money. I wished them good-morning, and gave them two Roman écus.

"This is an immense letter, my friend, but I had need of a long chat with you. Remember me to those of my friends and acquaintances who are still in Paris. How is our dear Abbé Delille? speak of me to him as well as to Brongniart and my dear Madame de Verdun. Alas! when shall I see you all again.

"Adieu."

As I could not remain in the very small apartment I occupied in the Academy, I was

obliged to seek another lodging. I did not regret the one I left, for it looked on to a little street in which carriages were always being put up, the horses and drivers made a diabolical noise; there was besides a Madonna at the corner of the street, and the Calabrians, whose patron saint she was, came to sing and play on string instruments before her niche till daybreak. I found some difficulty in getting a lodging, for I had great need of sleep, and quiet is absolutely necessary for me; I at first occupied apartments on the Piazza di Spagna, at Denis's, the landscape painter; but every night the carriages rattled along this square where the Spanish Ambassador lived. All sorts of people met there after I was in bed to sing in choruses pieces which the young girls and boys had improvised, most charmingly, it is true, for the Italian nation seems to have been created to make good music; but this habitual concert which would have enchanted me during the day, was distressing at night. I could not rest

before five in the morning. I therefore quitted the Piazza di Spagna.

I hired near there, in a tranquil street, a little house which suited me perfectly, where I had a charming bed-room, draped with green, an advantage I fully appreciated. I had visited all the house from top to bottom, and had even examined the yards of neighbouring houses without perceiving anything to alarm me. I fancied I should hear no other sound than that of a small fountain in the court, and in my delight I hastened to pay the ten or twelve coins for the first month in advance. Joyfully I went to bed in perfect peace, at two in the morning I heard an infernal noise precisely behind my head; it was so violent that my daughter's governess, who slept two rooms off, was awakened. As soon as I was up, I asked my hostess the cause of this fearful disturbance, I was informed that it was the noise of the pump attached to the wall near my bed; the washerwomen could not whiten the linen in the day, owing to the great heat, so they only came to this pump at night.

As may be imagined, I hastened to leave this charming little house.

After having sought fruitlessly to find a suitable abode, I was told of a small palace in which I could hire an apartment; having found nothing more suitable I installed myself there, I had more space than I required for comfort, but all the rooms were filthy. At length, after having cleaned some of them I settled down; from the first night I was able to judge of the delights of this habitation. A chilliness, a fearful damp I could have slept through, but an army of enormous rats, which ran over my room and eat the woodwork, prevented my doing so. When I asked the guardian the next day why this palace was so cold and why there were so many rats, he replied that for nine years he had been unable to let it: which I could well believe, notwithstanding all these drawbacks I was forced to remain there six weeks.

At last I found a house which seemed just the thing. I would not take it unless I tried it for one night first. Barely had

I got into bed than I heard a most extraordinary sound above my head; it was caused by quantities of little wood insects which eat the beams. As soon as I opened the shutter the noise ceased: but to my great regret, I was obliged to leave this house. I do not believe it possible for anyone to make more moves than I did during my sojourn in the Eternal City: consequently I am convinced that the most difficult thing to do in Rome is to find a resting place for one's head.

CHAPTER III.

Portraits done in Rome—The Holy Week—The Papal Benediction—The Carnival—Madame Benti—Crescentini—Marchesi—Her last appearance in Rome.

VERY soon after my arrival in Rome I painted my portrait for the Florentine Gallery. I depicted myself, with a palette in my hand, before a picture on which I was supposed to be tracing the head of our Queen with white chalks. Then I painted Miss Pitt, a daughter of Lord Camelford, she was sixteen and very pretty; therefore I represented her as Hebe on clouds, holding a goblet in her hand from which an eagle was drinking. I painted

the eagle from life and had great doubts whether he would not devour me; he belonged to Cardinal de Bernis. The wretched animal, who was accustomed to living chained up in a courtyard in the open air, was furious at being in my room and wished to fly at me. I confess I felt horribly frightened.

At the same time I took the portrait of a Polish lady, the Comtesse Potocki. She came to me with her husband, and when he had left us, she coolly observed: "It is my third husband; but I think I shall take up the first again, who suited me better, although he is a regular scamp." I painted this Pole very picturesquely, she is leaning against a mossy rock and behind her are some waterfalls.

I afterwards took the portrait of Mademoiselle Roland, then mistress of Lord Wellesley, who married her soon after. Then my own portrait on my reception to the Roman Academy; a copy of the one I destined for Florence, and a portrait of Lord Bristol, half length; that of Madame

Silva, a young Portuguese I met since at Naples, and of whom I shall speak later on. In fact I worked prodigiously hard at Rome and during the three years I passed in Italy. Not only did I find painting a great resource and enjoyment, surrounded as I was by works of art; but I had to rebuild my fortune, for I did not possess a hundred francs a year. Luckily I had only to choose amongst the greatest personages the portraits I wished to take.

I have decided on not entering into details concerning the beauties of Rome, because there have already been so many books printed on the subject I should fear to become wearisome; no one can imagine or have any idea of the grand and imposing spectacle produced by the Catholic religion who has not seen Rome at Easter or during Lent. The Holy Week commences on Palm Sunday and is passed in religious ceremonies, when the pomp is really magnificent.

On Wednesday, I went with the crowd to the chapel on Monte Cavallo, where they

sang Pergolesi's Stabat Mater, a celestial production. On Thursday, I assisted at the splendid mass at Saint Peter's. The cardinals clothed in rich chasubles, and holding wax tapers, walked to the Pauline Chapel, which was illuminated by thousands of tapers. Numbers of soldiers, wearing cuirasses and steel helmets, followed the cortège. The aspect of this procession was beautiful. The morning of Good Friday I went to the Sistine Chapel to hear the famous Miserere of Allegri, sung by soprano voices, without any instrument. In the evening I went to St Peter's, the hundred lamps on the altar were extinguished. The church was only lit by an illuminated cross of great brilliancy. This cross was at least twenty feet high and appeared to be magically suspended. We saw the Pope enter and kneel, he was imitated by all the Cardinals; but I must confess that what surprised and shocked me, was to see, during the prayer offered up by the Holy Father, several foreigners walk

about as though they were in the gardens of the Palais Royal.

I took care on Easter Day to be on the Piazza of St Peter's, and see the Pope give his benediction. Nothing could be more solemn. This immense Piazza was crowded from early morn by peasants and people from the neighbouring towns, all in divers and many hued costumes, along with several pilgrims. The galleries each side were filled with Romans and strangers, and in front of them were the Papal Guard and Swiss soldiers, with their ensigns and banners unfurled.

A most devout silence reigned over all; this crowd was as immoveable as the superb obelisk of oriental granite which adorns the Piazza, one only heard the sound of the water falling from the two beautiful fountains.

At ten o'clock the Pope arrived, dressed in white with his mitre on his head. He sat on a splendid crimson throne in the middle, outside the church. All the Cardinals surrounded him in their fine

robes. I must say that Pope Pius VI was superb. His healthy face bore no traces of age. His hands were white and plump. He knelt to read his prayer; after which he arose and gave three benedictions, pronouncing these words, "*urbi et orbi*" (to the city and to the world).

Then as if struck by a flash of lightning, the people, strangers, soldiers, everybody knelt, whilst the cannon resounded all around, a sight I believe none can behold without being affected thereby.

The benediction given, the Cardinals threw from the tribune a great number of papers, which I was informed were indulgences. It was only then that the crowd all dispersed, and thousands of arms were raised to seize one of these papers. The movement and eagerness of this crowd was beyond all description. When the Pope left, the military bands played, and the troops departed to the sound of the drums.

The crowd of strangers are attracted to Rome more for the Holy Week than the

Carnaval. The masks are dressed up as harlequins, &c., as we see them in Paris on the Boulevards. I only saw one young man walking about in French dress. He was imitating a rather affected dandy who we all recognised. The carriages were filled with richly costumed people. The horses were covered with plumes, ribbons, and bells, and the servants were dressed as harlequins, &c. But it all passed off very quietly.

One of my delights whilst in Rome was the music, and certainly I had plenty. The celebrated Banti was there during my stay, although she had sung several times in Paris I had never heard her, and I had this pleasure at a concert, which was given in an immense gallery. I do not know why, but I had imagined that Banti was extremely tall. She was on the contrary very small and ugly, with such masses of hair that her chignon was like a horse's mane. But what a voice! none could equal it for strength and compass; the salon, large as it was, could not suffice for it. Her manner of sing-

ing was the same as that of the celebrated Pachiraotti.

This admirable singer was very curiously formed: she had a high chest, shaped like a bellows; she permitted us to see this strange formation after the concert, when a few ladies and myself withdrew into an adjoining room: I fancied this might explain the power and agility of her voice.

Shortly after my arrival, I went with Angelica Kauffmann to see the opera of Cesar, in which Crescentini made his début. His singing and voice were perfection; he took a woman's part, and was clothed with a large panier, like those worn at the court at Versailles, which made us laugh heartily. Crescentini then possessed all the charm and freshness of youth, he succeeded Marchesi, to whom the Romans were quite devoted, so that at the last representation they openly told him of their sorrow; several wept bitterly, which was for some quite a second scene.

CHAPTER IV.

Piazza of St. Peter's—Daggers—The Princesse Joseph de Monaco—The Duchesse de Fleury—Kindness of Louis XVI.—Abbé Maury—Etiquette which prevented my taking the Pope's likeness—Tusculum—Villas Conti and Adrian—Monte Mario—Genesano—Lake Nemi—Adventure.

THERE is no city in the world where life passes so agreeably as in Rome; to walk within its walls is a pleasure, for one never tires of visiting again and again the Coliseum, the Capitol, the Pantheon, St Peter's with its Piazza, its superb pyramid, its noble fountain which the sun lights up so exquisitely with rainbow hues. This Piazza has a most wonderful

appearance at sunset and by moonlight. I am told that all the lower class of Roman women wear daggers; the men I know are never without them, and this custom often leads to serious results. One evening, shortly after my arrival in Rome, hearing a great noise and tumult in the street, I sent to inquire the cause, and was informed that a man had just been stabbed from motives of revenge. It is only amongst themselves, however, that they give way to the violence of their passions, visitors to Rome being quite safe. In the foregoing instance, there had been a quarrel of ten years standing, which shows how long a time an Italian remembers an injury.

The manners of the higher classes are, however, much more gentle, for society is the same as in the other cities of Europe. Besides I am not a good judge, for with the exception of what concerns my art, and the invitations which I received to numberless réunions, I had little opportunity of knowing the "grandes dames" in Rome. It

occurred to me, as it naturally does to all exiles, to seek in a foreign city the society of my compatriots. During the years 1789 and 1790, Rome was crowded with French *émigrés*, many of whom were old acquaintances. Amongst them I must mention the Duc and Duchesse de Fitzjames, with their sons; also the Polignacs. I did not care to visit this family often, for fear of exciting calumnious remarks; for it would at once have been said I was plotting with them, and I thought it a duty to avoid them as much as possible, on account of the relations and friends I had left in France. Besides these, many remarkable people arrived in Rome, amongst others the Princesse Joseph de Monaco, and the Duchesse de Fleury. The Princesse Joseph was a charming person, full of sweetness and amiability. Unhappily, alas! she did not remain in Rome, but soon returned to Paris to try and save the small fortune which still remained for her children. She arrived there during the "Terror"—was arrested and condemned to death, and suffered on

the scaffold. She might have had a reprieve could she have been induced to declare herself *enceinte*, but she refused to tell an untruth, and was guillotined.

Of all the French ladies in Rome, I admired the beautiful Duchesse de Fleury the most, she was quite young, and nature had lavished on her all her choicest gifts. She had a lovely face, and the figure of a Venus, added to this, her mind was of a superior order. We felt mutually drawn towards each other; she loved art, and like myself, was passionately fond of the beauties of nature; I found in her a companion I had often longed for.

We regularly spent our evenings together at the hospitable house of Prince Camille de Rohan, who was at that time Ambassador of Malta, and Grand Commander of the Order. Every evening he collected around him the most distinguished foreigners in Rome; the conversation was always animated and interesting; each one spoke of what they had seen during the day, and the wit and

tact of the Duchesse de Fleury was remarked by all.

This seductive woman appeared to me to be exposed to all the dangers which menace a lively imagination and an exalted soul; I feared for her happiness; I knew that she frequently corresponded with the Duc de Lauzun, who was a handsome man, witty and amiable, but at the same time utterly wanting in morality, and I greatly dreaded this intimacy for her, though I do not think there was real harm in it. I am not aware that he took an active part in the Revolution, but having remained in France, he was guillotined.

The Duchesse de Fleury returned to Paris in order to get a divorce from her husband; then having fallen desperately in love with M. Montroud, a clever, pushing man, she married him. They at once retired from society, to enjoy their happiness in solitude; but alas! solitude killed their love, and they returned to Paris for a divorce. Her last love affair was with a brother of Garat, who I am told treated her cruelly. At the

Restoration, which brought back her father, the Comte de Coigny, she regained peace and happiness, and she remained with him till his death. Before the return of the Bourbons, having occasion one day to visit the Emperor Bonaparte, he said to her brusquely :—

"Do you still love men!"

"Yes, sire, when they are polite," she replied.

The arrival in Rome of so many persons who brought news from France made me experience the most varied emotions, sometimes sad and sometimes gay. I was told for example that, shortly after my departure, the king having been requested to let his portrait be taken, replied: "No, I shall wait the return of Madame Le Brun to have my portrait taken, and it shall be a companion to the one she did of the Queen; I will be painted full length standing, and giving an order to M. de la Pérouse to make a voyage round the world."

Nothing gratifies me more than to recall the kindness Louis XVI. always showed to

me, and I always reproach myself that I hitherto have forgotten to mention that at the time I made the great picture of the Queen with her children, M. d'Angevilliers came to tell me that the King wished to give me the order of Saint-Michel, which was a decoration entirely for male artists and learned men of the highest order. As even at that time the most odious calumnies were circulated about me, I feared that so great a distinction would carry to its height the envy already excited, and, though deeply grateful, I nevertheless begged M. d'Angevilliers to try and induce the King to renounce the idea of according me this favour.

I met in Rome one of my best and oldest friends, M. d'Agincourt, who, when living in Paris, lent me all the beautiful drawings in his possession to copy. M. d'Agincourt was an enthusiastic lover of art, and above all of painting; I was very young when he left France, he said to me on leaving, "I shall not see you for three years," and fourteen had passed since then without his having

been able to tear himself from Rome, as he could not imagine that one could live anywhere else. He died there, regretted by all who had known him.*

It was also during my first visit to Rome that I met again the Abbé Maury, who was not then a cardinal; he came to tell me that the Pope wished me to take his portrait. I greatly desired to do so; but it

* Jean-Baptiste-Louis-Georges Veron d'Agincourt, archeologist and distinguished numismatist, was born at Beauvais, April 5th, 1730, and died at Rome, September 24th, 1814, at the age of eighty-four years. D'Agincourt began life at an early age in a cavalry regiment, but he soon renounced a military career. Having received an excellent education, the old soldier resolved to devote himself to the instruction of young orphans. The King, Louis XV., wishing to recompense his noble conduct and generous sacrifice, appointed him *fermier-général*. Having thus become rich, d'Agincourt visited in 1777 England, Holland and Germany, and in 1778 he first visited Italy, which pleased him so much, that he passed the remainder of his life there. He wrote the "History of Art, by Sculpture, from its Decadence in the Fourth Century till its Rise in the Sixth Century," in six volumes, enriched with three hundred and twenty-five engravings.

was necessary that I should be veiled whilst painting His Holiness, and the fear that under the circumstance I should not be able to do justice to my subject, compelled me to decline this honour. I was very sorry about it, for Pius VI. was one of the handsomest men I had seen.

I arrived in Rome, where it rains so little, precisely at the time of the autumn showers, which are real deluges. I had thus to wait for fine weather to visit the environs. M. Ménageot then accompanied me to Tivoli with my daughter, and Denis, the painter—it was a charming party. We first visited the cascades, which enchanted me so much the gentlemen could hardly induce me to leave. I sketched them in chalk. The mountain which rises to the left, covered with olives, completed the charm from this point of view.

When at last we left the cascades, Ménageot led us through a rough little path to the temple of the Sybil, where we dined with very good appetite; after which I lay down to rest and take my afternoon

siesta under the columns of the Temple. From thence I heard the sound of the cascades, which soothed me deliciously; for this sound has nothing harsh like so many others that I detest. Without speaking of the terrible noise of thunder, there are several which I find are quite unbearable, and which I can describe from the impression they convey to my nerves. There is the dull noise, the sharp noise; and there are some which are always agreeable, such as the waves on the sea-shore, for example, which is always lulling and fills me with sweet musings. I think I should be able to write a treatise on the sounds I have heard during my life, and to which my attention has been drawn. But to return to Tivoli. We slept at the inn, and early next morning returned to the cascades where I finished my sketch. After which we visited the Grotto of Neptune; from the height above falls an enormous quantity of water, which after boiling over the blocks of black stone, goes to form a large, tranquil and clear sheet further on. We

thus entered the cave, which is a mass of mossy rocks over which the cascades fall, making the cavern highly picturesque. From this and near the cavern we found another cascade, which was visible under the arch of the bridge—I sketched it also; for all artists must feel as I did, that it is impossible to walk round Rome without feeling the desire to use one's pencil; I have never made the smallest excursion, not even a walk without bringing back some sketches I had made. Every place was good as a site, any paper suited me for making a sketch. I recollect, for example, that during my stay in Rome, I received a letter from M. Laborde, which enclosed a letter of exchange for 18,000 francs on his banker in Rome, in payment for two pictures I had sold him before leaving France. Having no immediate need of the money, I did not at once make use of it, which (you will see) was a great mistake; finding myself one evening on the terrace of the Trinité-du-Mont, I was struck with the beauty of the sunset; and as I had

no other paper with me save the letter of M. Laborde, quite covered with writing, I took the letter of exchange which was inside, and sketched on the back of it the beautiful sunset. Three years afterwards when at Turin, on my way back to France, I got on "account" at a banker's there 10,000 francs, which owing to the bad exchange on Paris was only worth 8,000 francs. In consequence of this on my arrival in Paris, M. Alexandre Laborde being unwilling, or perhaps unable, to pay the 8,000 francs still due, we cancelled the agreement, he returned me my two pictures, and I gave him back the letter of exchange with my sunset sketched on the outside.

M. Ménageot took us to visit the Villa Aldobrandini, with its superb park, and fine fountains. From the casino, which is on high ground, the view is magnificent. On one side one can see the ancient aqueducts which cross the Roman Campagna; on the other lies the sea, and the beautiful line of the Apennines, and below again, Tusculum. We went to visit this ruined town, which

was built on a mountain. It was sad to see the masses of stone which once formed houses, the ruined walls straggling on the ground. The only part which remained standing was the court where Cicero held his school, These mournful sights give rise to sad thoughts.

On leaving Tusculum we visited Monte Cavi, where we had to ascend through a forest of trees to the summit, in order to see the remains of a temple of Jupiter which is said to have been built by Tarquin the Superb.

We also visited the Villa Conti, with its beautiful groves of trees; then on to the Villa Pallavicini, whose casino is superb, and the apartments very fine. Still further on we came upon a chapel in which was an image of Sainte Victoire, very well dressed, and in a shrine. The little boy who drew aside the curtain which covered it, accidentally moved the Saint, and I thought my daughter would have died from fright. We finished this excursion by a visit to

the Villa Bracciano, which I thought beautiful.

The recollection which I retain of these superb villas interests me far less than that of the grand ruin which is called the Villa Adriana. Notwithstanding the enormous *débris* that cover the ground on which this vast antique palace was built, one can still judge of its beauties; it is nine miles in circumference, its walls alone attest its ancient magnificence, and one may form an idea of the marvels which have been taken from it, on seeing the numbers of antique statues which at the present time adorn the Villa d'Este, the Capitol, and so many of the palaces of Rome. "Adrian," says M. de Lalande in his 'Travels in Italy,' had "imitated in his palace all that the art of byegone times had devised. One sees there a lyceum, an academy, the Portico and Temple of Thessaly, the Piscina of Athens, &c., &c. A double portico of great length and height had been constructed to ward off the fierce heat of the sun at all hours of the day. Twenty-five niches built in the walls of the library,

had no doubt contained as many statues." One recognises in these famed ruins the excellent arrangement of the apartments which are of vast size. The exterior and interior decorations have always been the admiration of architects, as much for their style as for their execution. We, alas! are very far removed from such elegance and grandeur.

It was with regret I left this place of splendour and ruin. Ah! what thoughts it gives rise to, and how our greatest works crumble into decay. Since the beginning of the world the marvels of the heavens alone remain unchanged. How can one feel pride, when each step that one takes in the environs of Rome reveals the instability of earthly things; for there one tramples under-foot the chefs-d'œuvre of antiquity. I remember one day walking near the city with the Duchesse de Fleury, we entered a villa where the garden was like a wilderness. We found several workmen pulling down a small house in which several statues and vases had been discovered, and these they

threw down without the least precaution. We were furious against the proprietor, who had evidently left no one to superintend his workpeople, and we decided on finding him out in order to stop this massacre; but we discovered he was absent from Rome, and we could do nothing to save these interesting discoveries.

One place that I had a great affection for was the summit of Monte Mario, on which is situated the Villa Mellini. I am told that on making the road up to it, they found quantities of oyster shells and a wheel similar to those used in the present day. One sees here on the roadside enormous trunks of felled trees; these trees were once those that grew in the sacred forest, leading to the ancient temple in the spot where the casino is now, and which is also abandoned. From the top of the mountains one can see the beautiful line of the Apennines; this view is so magnificent, the air is so good, and I felt so happy there, that after having come the first time with M. Ménageot, I returned several times by

myself, and in order that I might stay there some time, my servant brought my dinner in a basket. My dinner consisted of a chicken; but as there was a sort of a farm close by, I used to get from thence fresh eggs, which I added to my repast. I cannot describe the enjoyment I derived in contemplating the line of the Apennines, at the hour when the setting sun touched them with rainbow tints! The celestial blue of the sky, the pure air, the complete solitude, all exalted my soul; I addressed to heaven a prayer for France, for my friends, and God knows how I despised all the pettiness of the world, for as the poet Le Brun says:

"L'âme prend la hauteur des cieux qui l'environnent."

M. Ménageot had cautioned me never to walk alone in narrow and lonely paths, so my servant accompanied me; but I always made him keep at a distance, more particularly as his shoes made a most disagreeable noise. For this reason, I said to him one day: "Germain, please to keep at a distance, you prevent me from thinking."

So the poor man who had nothing better to do, amused himself by watching every person who came near me, and accosted them by saying: "Do not go near Madame, it prevents her thinking," which many of my acquaintances repeated to me in the evening.

When the heat became insupportable at Rome, I made several excursions in the environs, wishing to find a house for myself and the Duchesse de Fleury. I went first to Riccia, and took a lovely walk in the woods, which are superb and very picturesque—there are so many beautiful old trees, and a pretty fountain. After wandering about some time, we took a house at Genesano which was exactly what we required. The house had belonged to Carlo Maratta;* one could see on the walls of the grand salon several compositions traced by him, which made it very precious to me.

* Carlo Maratta, called Carlo della Madonne, was a celebrated painter of the Roman school, born at Camerano in 1625, and died at Rome in 1713.

The Duchess and myself lived there together most comfortably.

As soon as we were settled, our excursions in the neighbourhood began. We hired three donkeys, for my daughter was always with us; we went first to the lake of Albano, which is very spacious, and the heights which surround it are delicious. This promenade goes by the name of the Gallery of Albano. However, we soon preferred the borders of the charming lake Nemi, to the left of which is a temple of Diana, whose basement is covered by the water. This lake is twelve miles in circumference, and surrounded by such rich vegetation that the pathway is a mass of scented flowers. Above the lake lies the town of Nemi with its tower and aqueduct. Once I saw a procession wind along the mountain path out of the town, and I never witnessed anything more picturesque. On another occasion we visited the cemetery, where rows of skulls were arranged in order; Madame de Fleury could hardly be induced to tear herself away from them; as

for myself, I could not bear to look at them.

The trees around the lake of Nemi are enormous; some are so old that their trunks and branches are whitened by time. One night we made a party to go and see them by moonlight, and my daughter insisted on accompanying us. You cannot imagine anything more charming than the effect produced by these trees throwing their shadows on the still waters of the lake. We remained a long time lost in admiration; but suddenly the trees becoming agitated by the wind, appeared to take the form of menacing spectres; my poor child was terribly frightened, and trembling said to me: "They are living, mother, I assure thee they are living."

In certain circumstances, I must own, my companion and myself were not much more brave than my daughter, as witness the following adventure: having one day gone together for a walk in the woods of Riccia, in order to reach a lonely valley near there, we went along a lonely pathway in which to

the right hand and left were ancient tombs covered with ivy. All at once we perceived walking behind us a man who had all the appearance of a brigand. We hastened our steps, the man did the same; in our terror, wishing to make believe that our servants were not far off, the Duchesse called Francisco, and I, Germain; but the man only came nearer, and feeling too sure that the men whom we called for would not come, we began to run with all our might, in order to regain the public road which was at the top of the mountain. I never found out if the man who forced us to take such a breathless race was a brigand or simply a wayfarer.

CHAPTER V.

I leave for Naples—The Husband of Madame Denis, the Niece of Voltaire—The Comte and Comtesse Scawronski—Sir William Hamilton—Lady Hamilton—Her Story and Attitudes—The Hotel of Morocco, Chiaja—The Farnese Hercules.

I HAD been in Rome for nearly eight months, when seeing that all the visitors were leaving for Naples, I decided on going there also. I mentioned my project to the Cardinal de Bernis, who whilst approving, counselled me not to go there alone. He mentioned a Monsieur Duvivier, married to the niece of Voltaire, the widow of M. Denis, who intended taking

the journey, and who would be delighted by my accompanying him. M. Duvivier came himself to see me, and repeated all that the Cardinal had told me, and promised to take the greatest care of my daughter and myself. He added, as an additional inducement, that he had a small cooking apparatus under his carriage sufficient to roast a fowl, and which he said would be very useful, considering the bad living we should find in the best inns of Terracina.

These fine offers suited me exactly, and we started with the gentleman. His carriage was a large one; my daughter and her governess sat in the front seat, besides this there was a banquette in the middle, and an enormous valet-de-chambre came and seated himself before me, in such a manner that his great shoulders touched and annoyed me. I very rarely speak while travelling, and the conversation was reduced to a few words. But, as we were crossing the Pontine Marshes, I perceived a shepherd seated on the banks of a canal, whilst his sheep browsed in a field quite carpeted with

flowers, beyond which one could see the sea and Cape Circée. "This would make a charming picture," I said to my companion, "the shepherd, the sheep, the prairie, and the sea!" "These sheep are all dirty," he replied; "you should see what English sheep are like." Further on, on the road to Terracina, at the part where one has to cross a little river in a boat, I saw on the left, the line of the Apennines surrounded by superb clouds that the setting sun had lightened; I could not refrain from expressing my admiration.

"These clouds only promise us rain for to-morrow," said my companion.

On arrival at Terracina we stopped at an inn for supper, and to pass the night. We were very hungry, and I counted on the fowl M. Duvivier had promised us: but apparently it had been forgotten, for we had to content ourselves with two horrid little dishes, and we resumed our journey next morning, feeling very unrefreshed. The road to Naples is charming; here and there beautiful trees are seen, and the hedges

are masses of wild roses and scented myrtles. I was enchanted, though my companion said "He preferred the sunny fine slopes of Bordeaux, which promised good wine," but I would not listen to him any more; I decided my enthusiasm should not be frozen by this iceberg.

The following day we arrived at Naples between two and three o'clock. I cannot express the admiration I felt on entering this city. The brilliant sunshine, the sea and the islands which one perceives in the distance, Vesuvius, from whose summit rose a dense column of smoke, and then the population so animated, so noisy, and which differs so entirely from that of Rome, that one might imagine the two cities were a thousand miles apart; everything delighted me, but perhaps the pleasure of saying good-bye to my companions added greatly to my satisfaction. I called this gentleman my "extinguisher;" and since then I have frequently applied the term to others.

I had engaged the Hotel Morocco, situated on the Chiaja, facing the sea. Just in front of

me lay the Island of Capri, and this situation charmed me. I had scarcely arrived, when the Russian Ambassador to Naples, the Comte Scawronski, sent one of his servants to inquire after me, and immediately afterwards sent me in a sumptuous dinner I was all the more sensible of this kind attention, for I should have died of hunger before they had found the time in my house to think of cooking anything. That same evening I went to thank him, and I then made the acquaintance of his charming wife; they both entreated me to dine with them always, and though it was impossible for me to avail myself altogether of their kind proposition, I very frequently did so during my stay at Naples, their society was so very delightful to me.

The Comte Scawronski had very noble and regular features; he was very pale. This pallor was caused by the extreme delicacy of his health, which did not, however, prevent his being perfectly amiable, and a brilliant talker. The Comtesse was gentle and lovely as an angel; the famous

Potemkin, her uncle, had loaded her with riches of which she made no use. Her happiness was to lie stretched on a sofa, wrapped in a large black pelisse, and wearing no stays. Her mother-in-law ordered for her from Mademoiselle Bertin, marchande de modes to the Queen Marie Antoinette, boxes full of the most exquisite dresses. I do not believe the Comtesse ever looked at them, and when her mother-in-law entreated her to wear them, she answered carelessly: "What is the use? for whom? for what?" She made me the same answer on showing me her jewel case, one of the richest imaginable; it contained the enormous diamonds, which had been given her by Potemkin, and that I had never seen her wear. I remember her telling me, that to enable her to sleep she kept a slave under her bed, who every night told her the same story. In the day time she remained constantly idle; she was quite uneducated, and had no conversation: in spite of all this, thanks to her lovely face and angelic sweetness, she possessed an invincible charm. Comte Scawronski was very

much in love with her, and after his death, the Comtesse, whom I met again at St Petersburg, married the Bailli de Litta, who returned to Milan to give up his appointment in order to marry this careless beauty. She had two daughters by her first husband, one of whom married the Prince Bagration.

Their society was very agreeable to me, and I passed most of my evenings at the Russian Embassy. The Count and his wife often made up a whist party with the Abbé Bertrand, who was then French Consul at Naples. The Abbé was deformed in every sense of the term, and I do not know by what fatality it was that, as soon as I was seated near him, the song of the hump-backed always ran in my head. I had great difficulty in turning my mind from the subject. At last, one evening my preoccupation became such that I began to hum quite loudly the unfortunate song; I stopped short suddenly, and the Abbé turning towards me in the most amiable manner, said: "Go on, Madame, go on, it

does not wound me in the least." I cannot conceive how I could have committed such a breach of good manners; and I can never forgive myself.

Comte Scawronski had made me promise to paint his wife before anyone else at Naples; I agreed, and two days after my arrival, I commenced the portrait of the Ambassadress almost full length, holding in her hand a medallion in which was the portrait of her husband. I had given my first sitting, when I received a visit from the English Ambassador, Sir William Hamilton, who begged as a favour that the first portrait I took at Naples should be that of a beautiful woman he presented to me; it was Mrs. Hart, his mistress, who shortly afterwards became Lady Hamilton, and whose beauty has made her celebrated. After the promise given to my amiable neighbours, I would not commence this portrait until that of the Comtesse Scawronski was already far advanced. I also took a fresh portrait of Lord Bristol, whom I found again at Naples, one may say

he passed his life on Vesuvius, for he ascended the mountain every day.

I painted Mrs. Hart as a Bacchante reposing on the sea-shore, and holding in her hand a cup. Her lovely face was very animated, and was a complete contrast to that of the Countess; she had an enormous quantity of beautiful chesnut hair, which when loose covered her entirely—thus as a Bacchante she was perfect.

Sir William Hamilton had this portrait done for himself; but I must mention that he frequently sold his pictures when he found he could make money on them, which caused the eldest son of our Ambassador at Naples, M. de Talleyrand, to say one day on hearing that Sir William Hamilton was a patron of art: "Say rather it is art who is his patron." The truth is that after having bargained a long time for the portrait of his mistress, he got me to do it for a hundred Louis, which was 2,400 francs, and that he sold it afterwards in London for three hundred guineas, or in French money 8,000 francs. Later on when

I had again painted Lady Hamilton as a sybil for the Duc de Brissac, I made a copy of the head as a present to Sir William Hamilton, who without hesitation sold it.

The life of Lady Hamilton is a romance; she was called Emma Lyon, sometimes Mrs. Hart. Her mother is reported to have been only a poor servant; at thirteen years of age she entered a tradesman's family at Hawarden as nurse, but tired of the obscurity in which she lived, and fancying that in London she would get a better situation, she went there. The Prince of Wales told me he had seen her at that time standing in clogs at a fruiterer's door, and though very poorly dressed, her lovely face had attracted his attention.

A retailer in the market took her into his service, but she soon left him to become maid to a lady of good family and position. In this house she acquired the taste for theatres. She studied the attitudes, the inflections in the voice of actors, and imitated them perfectly. This talent did

not please or suit her mistress, who dismissed her in consequence.

It was then that having heard of a tavern much frequented by artists, she decided on going there to seek for employment. Her beauty was at its height; and besides she was very steady. In this situation she soon fell away from the path of virtue, and after being abandoned by different lovers, found herself reduced to the lowest stage of degradation. A strange chance drew her out of the abyss. A Dr. Graham hired her to show her at his house, under the name of the Goddess of Health; she was only covered with a thin veil; crowds of people went to see her, artists especially were charmed with her. Some time after this exhibition, a painter, by name Romney, took her as his model; he put her in a thousand graceful attitudes and placed her in his pictures. It was there she acquired the habit of being able to change her expression in a moment, which afterwards made her so celebrated. Nothing in fact was more curious than to

watch the facility which Lady Hamilton had of expressing in her features either joy or sorrow, and of imitating different persons. One moment she would be a delightful bacchante, with animated eyes, and hair in disorder, then all at once her face would express sorrow, and you saw a beautiful repentant Magdalen. The day Sir W. Hamilton introduced her to me, he wished me to see her perform; I was enchanted, but being dressed in the prevailing fashion, it shocked me. I made her get more artistic clothes, and with shawls which she knew so well how to drape, one could have painted quite a gallery of pictures from her different attitudes and expressions.

To return to the romantic life of Emma Lyon, it was whilst she was with the painter I have just mentioned, that Lord Greville, a son of the noble family of Warwick, fell so desperately in love with her, that he wished to marry her, when in 1789 he suddenly lost his place under government, and his fortune. He started immediately for Naples in the

hope of obtaining assistance from his uncle, Sir William Hamilton, and took Emma with him, the better to plead his cause with this relative. The uncle consented to pay his debts, on condition that Emma should belong to him. I have these details from Lord Greville himself. Emma thus became Sir William Hamilton's mistress, till the spring of 1781, when he decided on marrying her, in spite of the remonstrances of his family. He said to me, on leaving for London: "She shall be my wife in spite of them; after all it is for myself I marry her."

Thus, it was as Lady Hamilton that he brought her back to Naples a short time afterwards, and she became as grand a lady as could be. It is asserted that the Queen of Naples was very intimate with her, and it is true that the Queen saw her, but it may be said only politically. Lady Hamilton being very indiscreet, put her *au courant* of a host of little diplomatic secrets, which Her Majesty made use of for the affairs of the kingdom.

Lady Hamilton was not at all witty, though very sarcastic and ill-natured, and these two faults were the moving spring of her conversation; she was very crafty, and succeeded in getting married by exercising all her cunning. She had no style, and dressed badly as a rule. I remember that the first time I took her portrait, at my third sitting at her house at Caserta, the Duchesse de Fleury and Princesse Joseph de Monaco were present. I had arranged a shawl round her head in the form of a turban, one end of which fell in graceful drapery. This head-dress suited her so well, that the ladies thought her exquisitely beautiful. Sir W. Hamilton having invited us all to stay to dinner, Mrs. Hart (for she was not then married) left us for a short time in order to change her dress, and when she again entered the salon, her dress, which was of the most vulgar description, had so entirely changed her appearance to her disadvantage that the two ladies could scarcely recognise her.

When I visited London in 1802, Lady

Hamilton had just lost her husband. I left my card at her house, and she came at once attired in the deepest mourning to see me. She wore an immense black veil, and had cut off all her beautiful hair to dress it *à la Titus*, which was then the fashion. I found this Andromache enormous; for she had become horribly fat. She told me weeping, that she was much to be pitied, for in Sir William she had lost both a friend and a father, and that she should never be consoled. I confess that her grief made very slight impression on me; for I thought I could perceive she was playing a part, more especially, as a few minutes afterwards, seeing some music lying on my piano, she began to sing one of the airs she found amongst it.

Every one knows that, whilst at Naples, Lord Nelson was very much in love with her. She kept up a most tender correspondence with him; and one morning when I went to see her, finding her radiant with joy and wearing a rose in her hair like Nina, I asked her why she had placed it there.

"It is because I have just received a letter from Lord Nelson," she replied.

The Duc de Berri and the Duc de Bourbon, having heard of her attitudes, expressed a great wish to see her perform, which she had always declined doing in London. I begged her to give me an evening for the two Princes. I also invited a few other Frenchmen whom I knew were very curious to witness the scene; and I placed in the centre of my drawing-room a very large frame, enclosed on the right and left by two screens. I had arranged the light so as to shine on Lady Hamilton, as one would light up a picture. Everyone having arrived, Lady Hamilton went through numerous attitudes inside the frame, in a truly admirable manner. She had with her a child, between seven and eight years of age, and who resembled her greatly. I am informed that the child was the daughter of Lord Nelson. She brought her into the tableaux, and recalled to me the picture by Poussin, of the "Rape of the Sabine women." She passed from sorrow

to joy, and from joy to terror, so splendidly, that we were all enchanted.

As she remained to supper, the Duc de Bourbon, who was seated by my side, made me remark the quantity of porter she drank. She must have been well accustomed to it, for she was not tipsy even after two or three bottles. A long while after I left London; in 1815, I heard that Lady Hamilton had died at Calais in great misery and loneliness.

I have taken my reader far from Naples in 1790; so I must go back there.

I was delighted with my residence at the Hotel Morocco, to say nothing of my kind friends being so near me. From my windows I revelled in the most magnificent view and the gayest thoroughfare. The sea, with the island of Capri in front of me, Vesuvius to the left, which promised an eruption from the quantity of smoke it emitted; to the right the hill of Pausillipo, covered with beautiful villas, and superb vegetation; then the quay of the Chiaja

always so animated, and which presented so many and amusing pictures; sometimes it was the lazzaroni who came to quench their thirst at the fountain in front of my windows, where the young washerwomen came to wash their clothes; on Sundays it was the young peasants, in their finest costumes, who danced the tarantella before my house, playing the tambourine, and every evening I could see the fishermen with their torches, whose light was reflected in the sea. Beyond my bed-room was an open verandah which looked into a garden of orange trees in full flower; but as everything in this world has its drawback, my rooms had one, which I was obliged to make the best of. For many hours every morning I was unable to open my windows facing the quay, as underneath them an itinerant cooking place was posted, where the women cooked their dinner, generally of tripe fried in horribly bad oil, the odour of which came into my rooms. I was obliged therefore to look at the sea through

closed windows. How beautiful is the Bay of Naples; I have frequently passed hours of the night in contemplating it, when its waves were calm and silvery from the reflection of a superb moon. I frequently took a boat, in order to enjoy the magnificent coûp-d'œil which the city presents from the sea, and which rises as an amphitheatre. Sir William Hamilton had a small casino on the shore where I frequently dined. He used to throw pence into the sea for young boys to dive for, and when I had begun to tremble for their safety, as they remained so long under the water, they would re-appear triumphantly holding the money in their mouths. This little casino recalls to my remembrance another trait of Sir William Hamilton. One day when I was there I drew on the upper panels of the door, in chalk, two cherub's heads; I was much surprised to see them again in England at Lord Warwick's. He had had the panels cut out and sold my sketches; I do not recollect

for what amount. The beautiful public garden of the Villa Reale is on the Chiaja, and becomes in the evening a delightful promenade.

CHAPTER VI.

The Baron Talleyrand—Island of Capri—Vesuvius—Ischia and Procida—The Mont St. Nicolas—Portraits of the eldest daughters of the Queen of Naples—Portrait of the Prince Royal—Paësiello—Nina—Pausilippo.

IMMEDIATELY on my arrival at Naples, I called on M. le Baron Talleyrand, then French Ambassador to the Court, who showed me every kindness throughout my stay there. I found the amiable Portuguese Madame Silva was still with him, and together we planned numerous excursions. We first of all visited the island of Capri.

The eldest son of M. de Talleyrand and the Comte de la Roche-Aymon accompanied us. They had hired two musicians, one to sing and the other to play the guitar. We embarked at midnight by the light of a beautiful moon; but the sea was very rough, the great waves seemed as though they would engulf us at every moment, and I confess I nearly died of fright. As an excuse I must mention that I had never made so long a voyage before, my only previous experience being at Mordit, where the crossing is very short.

When we had fairly put off from the shore, M de Talleyrand told his musicians to sing; but the two poor fellows were so dreadfully sea-sick, it was impossible for them to attempt it. Madame Silva and the young Baron were also very ill; M. de la Roche-Aymon and myself were only slightly uncomfortable.

At last, after having been tossed incessantly by these terrible waves, we landed shortly after sunrise on the island of Capri. We found there only a few fishermen, who

inhabited the caverns in the rocks on the sea-shore. One of them offered himself as our guide, and we hired donkeys, as we wished to ascend to the highest peak of the island, the platform of St. Michel, where we enjoyed a splendid view of the sea and mainland, with Vesuvius, and the adjacent mountains. It was here that the palace of Tiberius stood, of which there remains one broken column. It was from this great height that Tiberius had not only his slaves, but all those who displeased him thrown into the sea.

We were shown a pretty house which had been built for an invalid Englishman, who had long been given over by the medical men at Naples. Having followed their advice and taken up a residence at Capri, he lived there for more than twenty years without any suffering.

After having greatly enjoyed the revivifying air and charming scenery, we returned to Naples, much pleased with our expedition, with the exception however of the young Baron de Talleyrand, who received

a rare reprimand from his father, for having taken the voyage in such bad weather and in so fragile a boat.

What I desired more than anything else was to make the ascent of Vesuvius, and I induced Madame Silva and the Abbé Bertrand to accompany me.

I will now copy the end of a letter I wrote from Naples to my friend M. Brogniart, the architect, as the impression made on me by the terrible phenomena was at that time more recent and more vivid.

". . . . . Now I must tell you of my various expeditions up Vesuvius.

"The first time my companions and myself were caught in a frightful storm, accompanied by rain, which resembled the deluge. We were drenched, but none the less we continued our road towards a portion of the summit, where we could see one of the great streams of lava running at our feet. I seemed to be standing near one of the entrances to the infernal regions, for the

stream of fire, which suffocated me, was nine miles in circumference. The bad weather on that day prevented our going further, and the smoke and quantity of cinders which covered us, made the summit of the mountain invisible. The thunders of heaven and the mountain mingled together continually, the noise was terrific, and as we were precisely under the cloud, we all trembled lest the movement of our party returning should attract the lightning.

"I reached my house in a pitiable condition; my dress was simply a drenched cinder; I was nearly dead with fatigue; and went to bed rejoicing.

"Far from being discouraged by my first attempt, a few days afterwards I made my second venture up my dear Vesuvius. This time my little brunette* accompanied me; I wanted her to see this grand spectacle. Monsieur de la Chenaye and two other persons joined us. The weather was per-

* Madame Vigée Le Brun habitually called her daughter by this name.

fect. Before nightfall we were on the mountain, to see the ancient streams of lava and watch the sunset on the sea. The volcano was more furious than ever, and as in the day time no fire can be seen, we watched the showers of cinders and lava pouring out of the crater, and remarked the beautiful hue the setting sun threw over the scene.

"We mounted to the Hermitage. The sun set gloriously behind the islands of Ischia and Procida; what a view! Then night came on, and the smoke was transformed into flames, the most beautiful sight imaginable. Tongues of fire darted from the crater, sending out great stones from the mouth, and the earth shook beneath our feet. I was really a little frightened; but did not allow myself to show it, on account of my poor little girl, who said to me crying; 'Mamma, must I be frightened?'

"This grand scene of destruction was so imposing and awful, that I could not refrain from continually looking back on my return journey to Naples, to see again and again

these tongues and streams of fire. Give me some news of yourself, and of our friends, &c."

Since that letter, I frequently visited Vesuvius, and on one occasion was almost lost in a fog.

One of the most charming excursions that I made in the environs of Naples was with Sir W. Hamilton and Mrs. Hart; we visited the islands of Ischia and Procida, and were absent five days. The weather was lovely; the sea was like a lake, so calm and still.

At half-past nine o'clock we reached Procida, and immediately took a walk, during which I was struck with the beauty of the women we met on the road. Nearly all of them were tall, and their costumes as well as their faces, recalled the Grecian type of women. There were very few nice houses, the cultivation in the island consisting of vines and fruit trees. We dined at noon with the Governor; from the terrace of his house, one could see Cape Misenum, the Elysian fields, and in fact

all that Virgil has described; these different points of view are sufficiently near to enable one to distinguish the details, and Vesuvius is seen in the distance.

After dinner we again entered our boat in order to reach Ischia by six o'clock in the evening; the island is volcanic, and is fifteen leagues in extent, and every where one can observe extinct craters. The hills are all cultivated. Saint Nicolas, the highest mountain in the environs of Naples, is higher than Vesuvius.

At Ischia we met many agreeable people, amongst these the family of General Baron Salis; the following morning at six o'clock, we, to the number of twenty persons, all started on donkeys, to make the ascent of Saint Nicolas, where we intended to dine. The road was very precipitous, and a dense fog coming on made it dangerous, for my donkey persisted in walking on the verge of the precipice, and I had entirely lost sight of my companions. I followed on, however, but not without commending my soul to God. One may imagine the terror

I was in, and the relief to my mind, when I heard the tingle of a little bell, which I at once thought was that of the hermit where we were all to dine. I found all the company had arrived before me, but the fog was so thick it was impossible to see anything; but after a while the clouds broke, and a splendid sky appeared.

We were contemplating the magnificent view when General Salis came to warn us that dinner was ready, an announcement to which we were by no means indifferent, after so much fatigue and tribulation. The dinner, which he gave us, might be compared to that of Lucullus; everything was recherché, nothing was wanting, even to the ices with which we ended our repast. The astonishment of the three good monks, who inhabit the rocks, and who profited by all that was left of our meal, was very entertaining.

After dinner, Madame Silva and myself took our siesta in the open air, reposing on sacks of barley, amidst the odour of broom

and a thousand different flowers. Then we again mounted our donkeys to visit the other side of the island, where we saw many interesting spots and returned much pleased with our excursion.

I also visited Pæstum, and though the distance from Naples is only twenty-five leagues, yet the journey is very fatiguing, but I felt capable of braving anything for the satisfaction of admiring monuments which are between three and four thousand years old. Of the three temples still standing, that of Juno was in a beautiful state of preservation; from the exterior one might imagine it to be quite perfect. This temple is noble and imposing, as is everything belonging to the ancients, near whom we are but pigmies. I was much surprised on visiting Pompeii and Herculaneum at the smallness of the houses and the temple of Isis, and must believe that the excavated part was only a suburb of the real city.

These excursions and many others did not prevent my painting a great deal at

Naples. I had undertaken so many portraits, that on my first visit to that city I remained six months, though I had only intended remaining six weeks. The French Abassador, M. le Baron de Talleyrand came one morning to announce that the Queen of Naples wanted me to take the portraits of her two eldest daughters, which I commenced without delay. Her Majesty was on the point of leaving for Vienna for the purpose of arranging the marriages of the Princesses. I recollect that on her return she said to me: "I had a prosperous journey, for I have happily settled two marriages for my daughters." The eldest married shortly afterwards the Emperor of Austria, Francis II., and the second, who was called Louisa, married the Grand-Duke of Tuscany. This last one was very ugly, and made such dreadful faces, that I did not wish to finish her portrait. She died a few years after her marriage.

When the Queen was gone, I painted the Prince Royal also. The hour for my sittings at the Palace was always at noon,

and to get there I had to pass along the Chiaja at the hottest time of the day. The houses to the left, facing the sea, are all painted pure white, and the glare of the sun on them nearly blinded me. To save my eyes I decided on wearing a green veil, which, as I had never seen one worn by any one previously, must have appeared very singular, for the veils then worn were either white or black; but a few days afterwards I noticed several Englishwomen imitated me, and green veils became the fashion.

I found the benefit of my green veil when at St. Petersburg, where the snow is so dazzling I should have lost my sight.

At this time I commenced the portrait of Paësiello. Whilst giving me a sitting he composed a piece of music, which was to be performed on the return of the Queen. I was charmed with this circumstance, as it enabled me to seize the traits of the great musician at the moment of inspiration.

I had been compelled to leave my dear

Hôtel Morocco, because, after having admired all the day, I felt obliged to sleep at night, and I found it impossible to close my eyes. The incessant rumbling of the carriages up and down the Chiaja was quite unbearable, and at last decided me on leaving my hotel. I settled myself again in a pretty little house quite on the sea-shore, for the waves broke underneath my windows. I was enchanted, for this sound soothed me deliciously; but, alas! eight days afterwards there came a storm, a tempest so violent, that the furious waves mounted even into my rooms. I was inundated, and the fear of a recurrence compelled me to leave my charming little house, much to my regret.

After having left this house, I hired one outside but quite near the city, and took possession on Christmas Eve.

The first evening, as I was just going to bed, I was all at once deafened by the explosion of quantities of squibs, which a number of boys had let off, and were throwing into my court and windows; this

amusement lasted three days and nights. Besides this, I was almost frozen in these apartments; as I was then engaged with the portrait of Paësiello, we had both of us to keep our fingers warm by continually breathing on them. I lighted a fire in my studio, but as in Italy more attention is bestowed in the endeavour to keep a house cool, the chimneys (mine being no exception) are so badly built, that the smoke nearly suffocated us. Our eyes streamed with water, and I can never understand how I was able to finish his portrait.

Paësiello's popularity was at its height at this time all over Italy. I often went to the Grand Opera with the Comtesse Scawronski; and was present at the first representation of "Nina," which is certainly a master-piece; but though the music of Paësiello is very beautiful, it did not afford me the same amount of pleasure as that of Dalagrac. The theatre of San Carlo, in which this opera was given, is the largest in Europe. I was there on the day of the

Queen's fête; it was magnificently lighted, and crowded, the *coup-d'œil* was superb. I remember having laughed very much that day at an amusing mistake I made. Seeing the Baronne de Talleyrand seated near me, and not having seen her for some time, I crossed over to her box to pay her a visit. She said to me: "The Ambassadress has had a great sorrow, she has lost Nigi." As I at once concluded it was of a friend she spoke, I lost no time in going to see her. I was quite struck with the change in her countenance, she appeared so sad, I began to think it must have been one of her children who had died. I then said how much I felt for her in her affliction, and asked if it was the eldest she had lost. At these words, notwithstanding her grief, she burst out laughing, and told me it was her dog that was dead.

One of my greatest pleasures was to walk on the beautiful hill of Pausilippo, under which runs the tunnel of the same name, which is a magnificent work of three miles in length, and which one can

see was built by the Romans. On this hill is situated the tomb of Virgil. In the evenings I walked on the sea-shore, accompanied by my child, whose education was my greatest care, and I procured for her the best masters. She showed a decided talent for languages, but preferred to all others the German. Her favourite recreation was writing novels, and I remember that at the age of nine years, when at Vienna, she wrote a little romance remarkable for its style and composition.

Cardinal to the left of the picture, are painted in the same style as Vandyke, and the remaining figures are truly life like.

On arriving at Perugia, which is a beautiful and celebrated town, I was induced to go and see a combat between a bull and dogs. This spectacle, which took place every six years in memory of a saint, is held in a sort of arena, in the manner of the ancients; I can truly say it gave me no pleasure.

It was with the greatest delight I found myself again in Florence, which I had in reality only passed through on my way to Rome. I at once commenced a copy of the portrait of Raffaelle, which I did *con amore*, as the Italians say, and which has never quitted my studio.

One souvenir of Florence, which I could not get rid of for a long time, was a visit I paid to the celebrated Fontana. This great anatomist* had endeavoured to repre-

* The Abbé Felix Fontana, born in 1730 at Pomerol, in Tyrol, died at Florence in 1803. Was Director of

sent, even to the smallest details, the interior of the human body. He showed me his cabinet, which was full of pieces of anatomy made in wax and flesh colour. I looked around me with admiration, for it is impossible to consider the structure of the human body without being convinced of the existence of a God. I had experienced no disagreeable impression till I remarked a recumbent woman, life-size, and who one might have supposed was alive. Fontana told me to go close to the figure, and then lifting a sort of covering, he exhibited to my astonished gaze all the intestines arranged as our own. This sight had such an effect on me, that I almost fainted, and for several days I could think of nothing else.

From Florence I went to Sienna, and I can never forget the beautiful evening I passed on arriving in this city, where I

the Museum of Anatomy and Natural History of Florence. It is owing to him that the Museum of Florence has been enriched by more than 1,500 anatomical pieces, perfectly executed in wax.

stayed but a short time. My custom has always been, on arriving at an inn, after ordering my supper, to take a little walk, which refreshes me after a day's travelling. The sun was just setting when I started for my first walk in Sienna. Near the inn I perceived an open door looking on to a garden and canal; I entered and seated myself to enjoy the fresh air. There I soon heard a natural concert, which ours are far from equalling. Many harmonious sounds lulled me deliciously; to the left, it was that of the cascade which filled the canal, then a light wind agitated the branches of some enormous poplars planted on the banks of the water, and a thousand birds sang their adieux to the day. I remained there more than two hours, and forgot my supper, till the servant of the inn found me, and dragged me from my enjoyment.

The following day I spent in sight-seeing. The town is very fine and beautifully situated on a hill, there are many palaces and gothic houses; amongst others is shown the house of St. Catherine and that of some other saint.

The Hôtel de Ville is full of antique pictures, but what I admire above everything is the cathedral. This splendid church is gothic, very spacious, and covered with marble within and without. The roof is of azure strewn with stars; the windows are all painted, and the pavement is inlaid with subjects from the Old Testament.

On my arrival at Parma, I was immediately made a Member of the Academy, to which I gave a small head I had painted of my daughter. I left Parma the 1st of July, 1792, and went on to Mantua, which well deserved a visit. Its magnificent cathedral is the work of Giulio Romano, who, as is well known, was painter, architect and sculptor. Giulio Romano died at Mantua in 1546, but his name lives still with all its glory in this city, where he left the greater number of his masterpieces.

CHAPTER IX.

Venice—M. Denon—The Marriage of the Doge with the Sea—Madame Marini—The Palaces—Tintoretto—Paccherotti—Cemetery — Vicenza—Padua—Verona—A Conversazione.

I WAS longing to see Venice, and arrived there on the eve of the Ascension. The aspect of the city surprised as much as charmed me. At first sight one might believe it was submerged, but soon the superb palaces, built in the gothic style, the walls of which are washed by the numerous canals, enchant the beholder by their wonderful and original effect. It was long, however, before I could

accustom myself to the quantities of black gondolas, which took the place of carriages. I should have preferred their being of a gayer colour; but ambassadors alone are permitted to have coloured gondolas.

M. Denon,* whom I had known in Paris, having heard of my arrival, came at once to see me. His talent and great knowledge of art made him a most agreeable cicerone, and I congratulated myself much on having met him again. On Ascension Day, he took me to the Grand Canal, where the marriage of the Doge with the sea takes place. The Doge and all the Members of the Senate were on board their gilded galley, called the 'Bucentaur;' the Doge drew from his finger a ring which he threw into the sea, and at the same moment the roar of a thousand guns informed the city and its environs of this

* The Baron Dominique-Vivant Denon, born at Châlons-sur-Saône in 1747, died at Paris 1825, was both artist, diplomatist, philosopher and lawyer. He wrote a small biography of Madame Vigée Le Brun. This sketch contains the portraits of Isabella-Teotochi Marini and of Madame Vigée Le Brun.

ceremony, which was concluded by a mass. A crowd of visitors were present at the spectacle, amongst others Prince Augustus of England, the charming Princesse Joseph de Monaco, who was on the point of returning to France, and whom I saw at Venice for the last time.

The following day M. Denon introduced me to Madame Marini, who has since married Comte Albridgi. She was amiable and witty. She proposed to take me that evening to a *café*, which surprised me a little, not knowing the customs of the country; but I was infinitely more surprised when she said to me: "Have you no friend to accompany you?" I replied that I was alone with my daughter and her governess. "Oh, well," she said, "you must at least appear to have someone; I will lend you M. Denon, who will give you his arm, and I will take the arm of someone else; people will believe that I have quarrelled with him, as it will be for the whole time you stay here; for you could not go without a friend."

Strange as this arrangement was, it suited

me admirably, since it gave me for a guide, one of our most charming Frenchmen; he was not at all good looking, which, however, had not prevented him pleasing a great many pretty women. At any rate *my friend* conducted me first to the palace to see the *chefs-d'œuvre* which Venice possesses, and which are very numerous, and afterwards the churches, which are full of the finest works of Tintoretto, Paulo Veronese, Bassana and Titian. The Church of San Marco, of which the lion is the symbol, is in the gothic style. As for the interior, it would be impossible to describe the riches which it encloses of all kinds; its gilded roofs, its columns of jasper, alabaster, verde antique, its pictures and bas-reliefs which make of San Marco a veritable treasure-house.

The society which I most frequented at Venice was that of the Spanish Ambassadress, who was most kind and obliging to me. She took me to the theatre to witness the *début* of a very beautiful young actress of only fifteen years of age, whose

singing and expression were quite astonishing. I also went to the last concert at which the celebrated Paccherotti ever sang. I must mention nevertheless that the best music I heard, whilst in Venice, was at a church.

After Paccherotti's concert, we were informed that in a room adjoining the theatre there was a famous improvisatore; I had never heard one, so we went, but the man appeared to me as if possessed; he ran about, yelling his improvisations with such energy that he literally dripped with perspiration; he spoke so fast that he could hardly be understood. He quite frightened us, he looked so furious; as for myself I thought him mad, and his talent seemed only like a frightful pantomime.

M. Denon having seen my Sybil, begged me to let him exhibit it at his house, in order to show it to his acquaintances. It followed that many persons went to see this picture, which had a great success at Venice to my infinite satisfaction. M. Denon, also entreated me to take the portrait of his

friend, Madame Marini, and I had great pleasure in doing so, for she had a lovely speaking face.

Before leaving Venice, I went with a friend of M. Denon's to visit the cemetery, and we rowed there in a gondola by the light of the moon. Our great aim was to enter the enclosure in which are the tombs of the Venetian families; but, alas! the door was locked. We managed, however, to enter through a broken bit of wall, and wandered about for a long time in silence. We had much difficulty in finding the same exit again, and were glad to find ourselves once more among the living; we hastened to rejoin our gondola and returned to the city at three in the morning.

I stopped at Vicenza, which dates its foundation B.C. 380 years. Its beautiful palaces, amongst which one remarks that of Comte Chieracati, were mostly built by Palladio and are of remarkable elegance.

I went to dine in one of these palaces. The proprietor, the Marquis ——, paid me a compliment I was far from expecting: he

received me in a gallery, where was a table on which lay a great many engravings; one only was placed at the top of the others, with the back upwards—curiosity induced me at once to turn it, and I saw my own likeness, which had been engraved from the one I had given to the Academy at Florence.

Padua is also situated on the Brenta. This town is very ancient, and is supposed to have been built by Antenos, the Trojan. The Hôtel de Ville is one of the most beautiful buildings in Europe.

I passed a week at Verona, which is a large city with spacious and well planned streets. Every evening, during my stay there, I went to the Conversazione, this is the term applied to all assemblies in Italy; there we all met in a gallery, the women seated on each side, and the men walking in the middle. The vivacity and gesticulations of the Italians made these réunions very amusing to an observer.

During the eight days I passed at Verona, I was obliged to change my apartments

twice. In the first I had asked if there would be any noise. "Not in the least," replied my hostess. But at six o'clock the next morning, I heard over my head a most outrageous noise; I asked what it could be? "Madame," was the reply, "it is nothing particular. It is only the village dancing-master who lodges above you, and every day the young people come to take their lesson for two hours, that is all." I found it sufficient to make me decide on going elsewhere.

CHAPTER X.

Turin—The Queen of Sardinia—Madame, wife of Louis XVIII.—Frightful news from France—The Emigrés—M. de Rivière joins me—Milan—Lago Maggiore—I go to Vienna—Monsieur and Madame Bistri.

MY desire being to return to France, I went to Turin with this intention. Mesdames de France, the aunts of Louis XVI., knowing that I must pass through Turin, had been good enough to give me letters to Madame Clotilde their niece, Queen of Sardinia. They wrote that they greatly wished her to have her portrait taken by me; consequently, as soon as I was settled, I presented myself to Her Majesty. She received me kindly, at the

same time told me she was sorry to disoblige her aunts; but having entirely renounced the world, she would not be painted. What I saw of her myself entirely agreed with her words and vows; this princess had had her hair cut off, and wore a little cap, which as well as her dress was of the simplest kind. Her thinness struck me so much the more, as I had seen her when very young before her marriage, and then her embonpoint was so prodigious that in France she went by the name of *the fat Madame.* Whether owing to a too austere devotion, or to the sorrow caused by the misfortunes of her family, the change in her appearance was so great that she was no longer recognisable. The King having joined her in the room where she received me; I was pained to see him also so pale and thin.

After this interview I went to visit Madame, wife of Louis XVIII. Not only did she receive me most kindly, but she arranged many picturesque excursions for me in the environs of Turin with her lady-in-waiting, Madame de Gourbillon and her

son. The country is very fine, but our first excursion was not a success. We set off in a broiling sun to visit a Chartreuse situated in the mountains. The ascent being very steep, we were obliged to make it on foot. After having climbed for a long time, till we were quite exhausted with fatigue, we at last reached the Chartreuse dying of heat and hunger. The table was already spread for the monks and travellers, which greatly rejoiced us; for one may imagine how impatient we were for our dinner. As it appeared long in coming, we thought some extraordinary preparations were being made in our honour, as Madame had recommended us to the monks in the letters she had given us for them. At last we were served with a dish of frogs in white sauce, that I took for fricasseed fowl; but as soon as I had tasted it, hungry though I was, I could not touch it. Then they produced three other dishes, on which I quite counted; alas! they too were frogs, so that we were obliged to content ourselves with dry bread and water, as the monks neither give nor drink wine.

I longed for an omelet, but there were no eggs in the house.

On my return from the Chartreuse I saw Porporati, who wished me to go and stay with him. He proposed to inhabit a farm which he possessed six miles from Turin, where he had some convenient and simple rooms. I accepted his offer with joy, as I detested living in the city, and at once settled myself, with my daughter and her governess, in this charming retreat. The farm was situated in an open country surrounded by fields, and little streams bordered with different kinds of trees, which formed charming groves. My child enjoyed as much as myself this quiet existence and pure air. We went on Sundays to mass by a charming road; the little church had a pretty porch; surrounded by this rural scenery, it seemed as though we could pray more earnestly. In the evenings, my greatest delight was to watch the sunset surrounded by golden clouds. Here I used to dream that the Revolution would soon cease, and that I should be able to return to France.

CHAPTER VII.

I return to Rome—The Queen of Naples—I return to Naples—Fête of the Madonna de l'Arca—Fête of the Pied de Grotte—Solfaterra—Pozzuoli—Cape of Misenum—Portrait of the Queen of Naples—Character of this Princess—My Return to Rome—Mesdames de France, Aunts of Louis XVI.

ALL the portraits I had undertaken at Naples being finished, I returned to Rome; when shortly afterwards meeting the Queen of Naples, who was returning from Vienna, she begged me with the most gracious and amiable manner to return to Naples in order to take her portrait. It was impossible to refuse, so I speedily put myself again *en route*.

What consoled me most for all these goings and comings was the thought that there still remained many interesting and curious things to see in this beautiful country. Sir William Hamilton took a pleasure in doing me the honours, and immediately on my arrival, he hastened to conduct me me to the Madonna de l'Arca, which for its originality, distinguishes it above all other village festivals. The square in front of the church was covered with stalls containing sweets, and cakes, and images of the Virgin, and groups of people in the different costumes of their cantons, some richly embroidered in gold. All the crowd entered the church to hear mass. Sir William Hamilton, Mrs. Hart and myself placed ourselves near a little chapel where was a picture of the Virgin as black as ink. The peasantry, both male and female, continually knelt before it to solicit some favour, or return thanks for one. They expressed their wishes in so loud a voice, that we could hear their petitions quite easily. First a handsome man, with

bare throat, came to return thanks for his child's restoration to health. After him came a woman who scolded the Madonna furiously, for allowing her husband to ill-treat her. I was suffocating with laughter, and Sir William had to continually remind me to restrain my feelings, as he assured me I should be very badly treated myself if I did not. After this woman, two young girls came, and asked on their knees that the Madonna would give them husbands. This went on for an hour in the most entertaining manner. As soon as each had finished speaking, a bell was rung in the middle of the church, which announced to the suppliants apparently that their prayer was granted, for they went away quite contented.

After the mass, all these good people met in the square before the church to dance the tarentella; no one could form an idea of this dance, without having seen it, no dance resembling it in any way.

I also went to another fête, much more celebrated than the one I have just

described; it was the fête of the Pied de Grotte. According to tradition, it was thus named by a hermit, who was ordered by the Virgin, who appeared to him, to build a chapel on this spot. It is very fashionable, as the royal family visit it each year in state to say their prayers; the light horse and royal regiments accompanying their Majesties, as also all the nobility. This fête is held in so much veneration that the inhabitants of the provinces, belonging to the kingdom of Naples, insist in the marriage contracts of their daughters that they should be allowed to go at least once to the festival of the Virgin of the Pied de Grotte.

I went accompanied by M. Amaury Duval, brother of M. Alexandre Duval, the dramatic author, and M. Sacant, both secretaries of legation at Naples, to visit Solfaterra, which was then in eruption. It was in the month of June, and the sun beat down upon our heads, whilst we walked on the burning cinders. In my life I never suffered so much from heat. To complete my misery,

I had my daughter with me; I covered her with my dress, but this was a very slight protection, and I trembled at each step, dreading to see her fall insensible from the heat. She repeatedly said:

"Mamma, one can die of heat, is it not so?"

God knows the agony I was in at having brought her. At last we reached a little hut, in which we could rest. The heat had so nearly suffocated us that none of us could speak or move for some time. At the end of a quarter of an hour M. Duval remembered that he had an orange in his pocket, which made us shout for joy; for this orange was like manna in the desert.

When we were sufficiently rested, we walked down to Pozzuoli where we partook of an excellent dinner of fish. The amphitheatre, though in ruins, is very curious and interesting; after dinner we hired a boat to take us to the promontory of Misenum. There we trod under our feet the most beautiful pieces of the most precious marbles; for Misenum was entirely de-

stroyed by the Lombards and Saracens; the only thing that remains is the grand souvenirs of Pliny.

Directly after my arrival in Naples, I had commenced the portrait of the Queen; this time the heat was so great, that one day Her Majesty, who had given me a sitting, fell asleep, and I did the same. The Queen of Naples, without being as pretty as her youngest sister the Queen of France, resembled her very much; her face was worn; but one could see she had been handsome; her hands and arms were perfection as to colour and form. This princess, who has had so much said and written against her, was in her own circle of a very affectionate disposition: her generosity was truly royal; the Marquis de Bombelles, ambassador to Venice in 1790, was the only French ambassador who refused to take the oath to the Constitution. The Queen, having heard that by this noble and courageous conduct M. de Bombelles, who had a large family, was reduced to the most cruel straits, wrote him a letter in her own

hand, congratulating him on his fidelity, and praying him to accept a pension of twelve thousand francs. Three of M. de Bombelles' children are at the time I write this in brilliant positions. The eldest, Comte Louis de Bombelles, is Austrian Minister to Switzerland; the second, Comte Charles, is Master of the Household to the Empress Marie-Louise; and the third, Comte Henri, is Austrian Minister to Turin. Besides this generous action of the Queen of Naples, I know many others which do honour to her heart; she loved to minister to those in sorrow, and was not afraid of mounting up to a fifth floor to give aid to the unfortunate. This was the noble woman against whom, under Bonaparte, were exhibited in the streets of Paris the most infamous and obscene engravings. It was necessary to calumniate her, they wanted her crown. One knows that she was betrayed by those whom she had always honoured by her friendship and confidence. The woman whom she had loved best corresponded with the conqueror who succeeded, by underhand

dealings, in dethroning the sister of Marie Antoinette, to put in her place Madame Murat.

The Queen of Naples had a noble disposition, and was very clever. She bore the whole weight of the Government. The King would not reign; he remained nearly always at Caserta, occupied by manufactures, the workwomen employed, it is said, composed his seraglio.

The Queen having heard that I was about to return to Rome, sent for me, and said: "I am very sorry that Naples is not able to keep you longer."

Then she offered me a small house on the sea-shore, if I would only be induced to remain; but I was longing to see Rome again, and I refused with all the gratitude so much kindness inspired. At last, after having paid me munificently, as I was taking farewell of her, she gave me a beautiful box of old lacquered work which contained her initials, surrounded with very fine diamonds. This gift was worth ten thousand francs; but I shall never part with it.

Magnificent though the country was, which I was on the point of leaving, it would not have suited me to pass my life in it. There are too many disagreeables attached to a residence at Naples; for first one has to overcome the terror inspired by the volcanos; the daily fear of earthquakes and eruptions, to say nothing of the pestilence, which during the great heat is always more or less active in the vicinity of the city. All these things are unpleasant, one must own; but if they did not exist, who would not live in such a delicious climate?

Sir W. Hamilton, who for twenty years was English Ambassador to Naples, thoroughly knew the manners and customs of the highest society in this city. What he told me, I must confess was not favourable to the Neapolitan nobility, but since then, no doubt everything is much changed. According to him, the Neapolitan ladies were surprisingly ignorant; they read nothing, though they made pretence of doing so; for one day, calling on one of them, and seeing a book in her hand, he saw on going up to her that she held it

upside down. Having no sort of education, many amongst them do not even know that there are any other countries besides Naples, and their only occupation is love, which for them often changes its object.

What I saw myself was, that the ladies gesticulate much in speaking, that the only exercise they take is in a carriage, never on foot. Every evening they go to the theatre, and receive visits in their boxes, which to my mind is not half so agreeable as seeing one's friends at home.

The people of the lower classes are most noisy in their cries, and wild in their gestures. I once watched a funeral procession pass beneath my windows, consisting of the friends and acquaintances of the deceased; the men and women groaned aloud in the most lamentable manner. The widow followed, uttering the most frightful screams, and wringing her hands. I was told that this was only according to custom.

One ought, if possible, to witness the expression on the faces of the people on the great festival of St. Gennaro. The desire

and impatience depicted on their countenances is wonderful. Then, as soon as the miracle is accomplished, every face is filled with joy and delight.

The most singular specimens of the Neapolitan population are the Lazzaroni. These people have simplified living to such an extent that they are always homeless, and exist on the smallest amount of food; they lie about on the steps of the churches, under the shadows of the walls, and on the sea-shore. They are scantily clothed, and their children are naked to the age of twelve. I was at first both scandalized and horrified to see them in this condition playing about on the Chiaja, where carriages are always passing; for this road is the regular promenade of all the society of Naples, but I soon became accustomed to the sight.

The destitution of the Lazzaroni does not however make them thieves; they are perhaps too lazy for that, besides having need of so little to enable them to live. The greater number of the thefts committed at

Naples are by the hired servants of all nations who find their way there.

I bade adieu to the beautiful bay of Naples, the charming hills of Pausilippo and terrible Vesuvius with regret, and left for the third time to visit my dear Rome, and admire Raffaelle again in all his glory. When there, I undertook a great many portraits, which to tell the truth only partially satisfied me. I greatly regretted not having been able to employ my time, either at Naples or Rome, in painting pictures of subjects which inspired me. I had been named a member of all the Academies of Italy, which encouraged me to merit such flattering distinctions, and I was going to leave nothing in this lovely country which would add much to my reputation as an artist. These ideas were constantly on my mind—I have more than one sketch in my portfolio whioh could furnish the proof; but the want of money, as I had not one penny left of what I earned in France, and the natural weakness of my character, made me undertake engagements to the weary task of

portrait painting. The result is that after having devoted my youth to work, with a constancy and assiduity very rare in a woman, loving my art as much as my life, I can scarcely count four works (portraits included) with which I am really pleased.

Many of the portraits which I took in Rome during my last stay there, however, procured me some gratification, amongst others, that of seeing again Mesdames de France, the aunts of Louis XVI., who at once asked me to take their portraits. I was aware that a lady artist, who had always been inimical to me, had tried to injure me in the estimation of these princesses; but the extreme kindness with which they treated me, assured me how little effect these vile calumnies had produced on them. I commenced by taking the portrait of Madame Adelaide; and afterwards that of Madame Victoire.

This princess on giving me her last sitting said:

"I have just received some news which has filled me with joy; for I learn that the

King has succeeded in leaving France, and I have just written to him putting the address only: A sa Majesté le Roi de France, they will soon know where to find him," she added smiling.

I returned home greatly delighted, and told the good news to my daughter and her governess, who thought like myself; but in the evening we heard my servant, a very morose man singing, which he had never done before, we also knew him to be a revolutionist. We at once exclaimed: "Some misfortune has happened to the King!" which was confirmed the very next day, when we heard of his arrest at Varennes, and his return to Paris. The greater number of our servants were Jacobite spies, which explains how they knew sooner than we did all that passed in France.

CHAPTER VIII.

I leave Rome—The Cascade of Terni—The Cabinet of Fontana at Florence—Sienna—Its Cathedral—Parma —My Sybil—Mantua—Giulio Romano.

I LEFT Rome the 14th of April, 1792. On entering the carriage I wept bitterly. I envied the fate of all those that remained; and on the road, when meeting travellers, I could not help crying out: "How happy they are, for they are going to Rome!"

My first resting place was at Civita-Castellana. On leaving this town, the road wound amongst great rocks and precipices, and the country seemed very dismal; but

on approaching Narni, the scenery became very lovely, the roads bordered by hedges of broom and honeysuckle. We were delighted with the famous cascade of Terni. I sketched the picturesque entrance to the grotto, and carried away some pieces of the petrified rock.

I remained one day at Terni, and the following day continued our journey to Spoleto where we arrived in the evening; it is here I saw that grand composition of Raffaelle the "Adoration of the Kings." This picture not being finished, clearly shows the method of the divine master; Raffaelle first painted the heads and hands, as for the draperies he tried different tints before painting them.

After Spoleto, we passed Trevi, Cétri and stopped at Foligno. There I found another painting of Raffaelle, one of the most beautiful and original that he ever made; it represents the Virgin in the clouds, holding the infant Jesus in her arms. The infant is full of life, and appears in relief; the Virgin is a noble figure; Saint John and the

Alas! it was in this peaceful abode that the cruellest blow struck me. The post brought me one evening a letter from my friend, M. de Rivière, my sister-in-law's brother, giving me information of the frightful occurrences of the 10th of August, with the most shocking details. I was thunderstruck; the lovely sky, the beautiful country, seemed all at once to be covered with a funereal gloom; in the anguish I endured, solitude became insupportable, and I decided on returning at once to Turin.

On entering the city, my God! what did I see? the streets, the squares, crowded with men and women of all ages, who, flying from France, sought an asylum in Turin. They arrived by thousands, and it was a piteous spectacle. The greater number were destitute of everything, for they had barely time to escape with their lives. One of them, the Duchesse de Villeroi, then very aged, was entirely dependant on her maid-servant, who had saved a small sum of money, and who

allowed her half a franc a day for her food. The King of Sardinia gave orders that these unfortunate people should be lodged and fed; but there was not room for all. One may imagine how much this cruel sight augmented my anxieties as to what was occurring in Paris, more particularly as M. de Rivière did not arrive, though he had written to tell me to expect him at Turin.

At last, after much delay he arrived, but so horribly changed, that I could scarcely recognise him. The terrible scenes he had witnessed, had affected both mind and body. He told me that at the moment he was crossing the bridge of Beauvoisin, the people were massacring the priests with the most indescribable fury, and that he had been obliged to remain at Chambery by an attack of fever, caused by the atrocities he had seen.

I scarcely dared to ask news of my mother, brother, and M. Le Brun. Nevertheless, M. de Rivière reassured me a little, by telling me my mother had not left Neuilly, that M. Le Brun remained quietly in Paris, and that

my brother and his wife were in hiding.

In consequence of the disastrous news I heard from France, I gave up the idea of going there. I hired a small house in the environs of Turin. M. de Rivière, who lived with me, derived much benefit from the complete rest he enjoyed. As for myself, I went on painting. I painted a child bathing, after my daughter, and sold it at once to Prince Ysoupoff, who came to visit me.

Having decided on returning to Milan, and not knowing how to return in some measure the kindness Porporati had shown me, the idea occurred to me to take his daughter's portrait, whom he adored, not without reason. He was so delighted that he had it engraved at once, and gave me several proofs of it.

Half-way on the road to Milan, I was arrested for two days as a Frenchwoman. I wrote at once for a "permis de séjour" which the Comte de Wilsheck, Austrian Ambassador obtained for me. I went at once to thank him on my arrival, and was received

with much kindness. He pressed me to go to Vienna, where my presence, he assured me, would give great satisfaction. As the news I continued to receive from France obliged me to postpone indefinitely my return there, I at once decided on following his advice.

My reception at Milan was very flattering; the evening of my arrival I was serenaded by the young people of the best families. I was listening to the music with the greatest pleasure, never suspecting that I was the object of this ovation, when my hostess came in to tell me, and to hope that I should remain some time at Milan.

My first visit was to the refectory of the Church of the Grazia, to see the celebrated "Last Supper," painted on the wall by Leonardo da Vinci. It is one of the masterpieces of the Italian school of painting; but it is in a sadly defaced condition, and I am told that during the last wars of Bonaparte in Italy, the soldiers amused themselves by shooting at it.

I hastened also to see the cartoons of the

Athenian school, traced by Raffaelle, and I gazed at them a long time with delight.

I made many excursions in the environs of Milan, and after some days visited the Lago Maggiore, whose great extent is surrounded by mountains, and in the middle of which is situated the islands Isola Bella, Isola Madre, and Isola Pescatore. I stopped at the first, having received permission to do so from Prince Borromeo, to whom it belongs. The Madre is considered the prettiest; but on embarking with the intention of going there, the lake became so furious I was compelled to give up my project.

On my return to Milan, I went to see the cathedral, which is very beautiful. As a whole, Milan reminded me very much of Paris. The opera house (La Scala), where I heard excellent music, is immense. I went to many excellent concerts, for Milan possesses many famous singers. At the last I went to, I was seated by a beautiful Polish Countess, Madame de Bistri. In the course of conversation I mentioned my approaching

departure for Vienna, and she immediately said she and her husband were also going there, and though they had not intended starting as soon as myself, they would alter their day to suit mine.

It would have been impossible to find more agreeable companions. They overwhelmed me with kindness, and I may say that both husband and wife showed the greatest goodness of heart, for they brought with them two poor *émigré* priests, who had just escaped from the massacre at the Pont de Beauvoisin; they befriended these unfortunate people the whole way to Vienna.

CHAPTER XI.

The Comtesse de Thoun and her Soirées—The Comtesse Kinska—Casanova—Prince Kaunitz—Baron de Strogonoff—Comte de Langeron—Comtesse de Fries—Her Spectacles—Comtesse de Schönfeld.

WE arrived at last at the good city of Vienna, where two years and a half of my life passed in such an agreeable manner, that I have always felt obliged to the Comte Wilsheck for having induced me to make the journey. As Monsieur, Madame de Bistri, and myself did not wish to separate, we established ourselves in one of the faubourgs of the city, and there I took the portrait of the

charming Comtesse de Bistri, who was a very handsome woman.

Shortly after my arrival, I went to deliver in person the letters of introduction given me by Comte Wilsheck. Amongst the number was one for the celebrated Prince de Kaunitz who had been Minister under Maria Theresa.* I also called on the Comtesse de Thoun. She invited me at once to her soirées, where all the best society in Vienna congregated. I met many émigrés from our poor France: the Duc de Richelieu, the Comte de Langeron, the Comtesse de Sabran and her son, the Polignac family, and later on, the kind and good Comte de

* Wenceslâs-Antoine, Count de Rietberg and Prince de Kaunitz, exercised for such a long period the direction of governments and courts, that he went by the name of *Le Cocher de l'Europe.* The patriotism of Prince Kaunitz was such, that one day having proposed to Marie-Thérèse, a field-marshal to be President of the Aulic Council of War, the Empress said to him: "But this man is your declared enemy;" the Prince replied: "Madame, this man is the friend of the State, and that is the only thing I ought to consider."

Vaudreuil, whom I was delighted to meet again.

I have never seen assembled in any drawing-room a greater number of pretty women than I met at Madame de Thoun's. The greater number of these ladies brought their work, and sat round a large table. Sometimes I was consulted as to the shading of their silks; but as what I detest more than anything else is to look at bright colours by lamp or candle light, I very often gave my advice without looking. As a rule, I have always taken care of my eyes, and I have found the benefit of it, for even now I paint without being obliged to wear spectacles.

Amongst these pretty women, there were three quite remarkable for their beauty: the Princesse Linoska, wife of the Russian Ambassador, Count Rasomoffski, and the charming Comtesse Kinska, née Comtesse Diedrochstein. This last was endowed with every charm; her face, her figure were perfection: I was much surprised when I heard her history, which was quite a romance The

parents on both sides had agreed to marry their children without their knowing anything about the arrangement. The Count lived somewhere in Germany, and only arrived in time for the celebration of the marriage. Immediately after mass, he said to his young and charming wife: "Madame, we have obeyed our parents; I leave you with regret; but I cannot conceal from you that for a long time I have been attached to a woman without whom I cannot live, and I am going to rejoin her." The post carriage was at the church door; this adieu made, the Count entered it and drove off to join his Dulcinea.

The Comtesse Kinska was therefore neither girl, wife nor widow, and this circumstance must have astonished every one who beheld her; for I never saw any woman as lovely. Joined to her great beauty was a most amiable disposition, and much kindness of heart; one day when she gave me a sitting, my daughter's governess entered the room with such a

bright and happy look, that I asked her what she had heard to make her so. "I have just heard from my husband," she replied, "that I have been placed on the list of émigrés. I lose eight hundred francs a year by it: but I am quite content, as at last I am put on the list of honest people." The Countess and myself were greatly touched by such honourable disinterestedness. A few minutes afterwards, Madame Kinska told me that the dress I wore for painting in seemed so comfortable, that she would like to have one made like it, for she knew my child's governess made these blouses for me. I offered to lend her one. "No," she replied, "I should like you to have it made for me by Madame Charot, your governess; I will send her the material." A few days afterwards, I sent her the dress made as she requested. As soon as our sitting was over, the Countess ran to Madame Charot's room, and gave her ten louis (two hundred francs); it was declined: but the amiable Countess put it on the mantel-

piece, and fled like a bird, very happy to have contributed a quarter of the lost pension to this good woman.

It was always my custom, on arriving in a town, to make my first visits to the artists, and I did not delay in calling on Casanova, a celebrated painter of battle pieces. He was then about sixty years old, but was quite strong and robust, though he wore two or three pairs of spectacles, one over the other. He was then working at several grand pictures, representing the noble deeds of Prince de Nassau. Casanova was full of spirit and originality. He was a great gossip, and he used to amuse us extremely at the dinners given by Prince Kaunitz, by stories which were sometimes pure fictions but very droll and comical. One day, dining at the same house, the conversation turned on painting, and Rubens in particular, when some one, alluding to his immense talent, said, that his general knowledge, which was also prodigious, had caused him to be named an ambassador.

At these words, an old German Baroness interrupted the speaker, and said: "What! a painter, ambassador! no doubt it was an ambassador who amused himself by painting." "No, Madame," replied Casanova, "it was a painter who amused himself by being an ambassador."

Casanova had made a large fortune; but his extravagance was such that he dissipated it all away.

On leaving him, I called on Prince Kaunitz whom I greatly desired to know. This great minister was then about eighty-three years of age at the least; he was very tall, very thin, and held himself very erect. He received me with the greatest kindness, and asked me to dine with him the following day. As we sat down to table at seven o'clock, and I was in the habit of dining by myself at half-past two, this invitation and those which followed, whilst very flattering, did not altogether please me. I did not like dining so late, or dining with so many people, for his table, composed principally of strangers, was always laid for thirty and

sometimes more. From that day I always dined at home first, and was obliged to conceal this as much as possible, in taking half an hour to eat a boiled egg; but this little trick which the Prince speedily perceived, annoyed him, and caused us to have many little quarrels; notwithstanding, he had a sincere friendship for me, for which I feel deeply grateful. He always called me his *good friend*, and he insisted that my "Sybil" should remain on view for a fortnight in his salon, during which he did the honours of this picture to the city and the court, with an amiability that was quite affectionate for me.

Notwithstanding his great age, Prince Kaunitz was in full possession of all his faculties. His taste, his exquisite judgment, and good sense astonished everyone. His only weakness was to imagine that he rode on horseback better than anyone. He certainly acquitted himself wonderfully. He rode like a Frenchman; his costume and figure reminded me of the cavaliers of the time of Louis XIV, such as we see them

represented in the beautiful pictures of Wouvermans.

Prince Kaunitz was held in the highest esteem at Vienna; the glory he had acquired when minister, still remained with him. The first day of the year, and that of his fête, an immense crowd came to his house to compliment him; one might have thought him an emperor on these two days, therefore I was much surprised at the indifference exhibited by the Viennese at the time of his death. I was still at Vienna when this event occurred.

Prince Kaunitz died after a very short illness, and people hardly seemed to notice the disappearance of this great man. As for myself, I was very much grieved. I remember going to see an exhibition of figures in wax shortly after his death; I was quite shocked at the sight of that of the Prince lying down, dressed in the clothes he usually wore, in fact absolutely such as I had often seen him in. This unexpected sight made a sad impression on me, for I know nothing more painful than to see an

exact representation of one whom one has loved, deprived of activity and life.

Shortly after my arrival in Vienna, I made the acquaintance of the Baron and Baroness Strogonoff, who both asked me to take their portraits. The Baroness was much liked for her sweetness and extreme benevolence; as for her husband, he possessed the happiest art of animating society; his replies were the delight of Vienna, as also his fêtes and private theatricals, to which everyone strove to be invited. I have known very few men as amiable and gay as Baron Strogonoff. When the desire for a good laugh and to amuse himself took him, he would invent all the follies imaginable. One day, amongst others, knowing that many of his acquaintances and mine were going to see the exhibition of figures in wax, he excused himself under some pretext of being unable to accompany us, and going there before we did, he craftily placed himself behind a pedestal, in such a manner as only to show his head. Going through the portrait gallery, we passed before him, but he had fixed his eyes and

features so immoveably that none of us recognised him. After having visited the other rooms, we passed him a second time without recognition; but, at last impatient at our want of notice, he moved and spoke. We were all frightened and much surprised at not having found him out.

I have rarely seen acting better done than by amateurs at the Baroness de Strogonoff's. The first rôles were filled by Comte de Langeron, who played the lovers with the greatest grace and ease, and who had a real passion for acting; M. de Rivière played the comic parts in an astonishing manner. This amiable man was very talented; Doyen, the painter, said of M. de Rivière that he was an ornament to society. He painted very well; he sang and played on the violin and piano; he had perfect tact and an excellent heart. M. de Rivière was small, thin, and even at the age of sixty, his figure and appearance was that of a man of thirty.

As for M. de Langeron, he was both charming and witty. This brave and

amiable Frenchman, died (owing to our revolution) with the Russians, as Governor of Odessa.*

The Chevalier de Boufflers, the Vicomte de Ségur, and Comte Louis de Narbonne, were models of grace and wit. I never heard a more courtier-like reply than that made by the last named to the Emperor Bonaparte, who, speaking of Madame de Narbonne, said to him: "Your mother does not like me." "I know it, Sire," replied the Count, she has not yet gone further than admiration."

The Baron de Strogonoff's was not the only house where theatricals were performed in Vienna. The Comtesse de Fries, widow of the famous banker of that name, had a

* It is painful to be compelled to add that M. de Langeron became the enemy of his country. In 1814, General Langeron, who served under Count Blucher, fought with him against the French at Soissons, Laon, Vitry, and marched on to Paris. In 1815 he fought against the French again, and contributed to the disaster of Waterloo. Count de Langeron, who was born in Paris, 1763, died at Odessa, 1831.

very pretty theatre, and I frequently witnessed very good acting there; her daughter, Mademoiselle de Fries, had a beautiful voice, and sang delightfully. Her sister, the Comtesse de Schönfeld, was very pretty, and gave herself great airs, to such a degree, that one day when her mother had given a part to act in a certain piece to her nephew, who had a very common-place appearance; and as I was seated near Madame de Schönfeld, I asked her who the gentleman was, she replied confusedly: "He is my mother's nephew," not wishing to say, he is my cousin.

CHAPTER XII.

Portraits I took in Vienna—Royal Museum—Schönbrunn —The Prater—Balls — Prince Esterhazy—Princesse Maréchale Lubomirska—Comtesse de Rombec—Death of Louis XVI. and Marie-Antoinette—Death of Madame de Polignac.

MONSIEUR and Madame Bistri being obliged to return to Poland, I engaged apartments in Vienna itself; of which city it is said there are three causes of death: the wind, the dust, and the waltz.

As soon as I was settled, I made many portraits, amongst others, the daughter of the Spanish Ambassador, Mademoiselle de

Kagnenek, who was sixteen and very pretty, also those of the Baron and Baroness de Strogonoff. My Sybil, which crowds came to my house to see, contributed not a little in deciding many people to ask me to paint them. It would be difficult for me to express all the gratitude I felt for the kindness I received in this city. Not only the Viennese showed affection for myself personally, but they also proved it by hanging my pictures in the best positions. I remember, for example, that Prince Paar, to whom I had sent the large portrait I had made of his sister the kind and good Comtesse Dubuguoi, invited me to go and see the picture at his house. I found the painting placed in the *salon*, and effectively draped in green, which threw out the colours, and showed it off to great advantage.

One circumstance greatly astonished me, and that was seeing ladies take their work and knitting to the theatre; amongst others the beautiful Comtesse Kinska would knit coarse socks in her *loge;* I thought this very strange, but when I heard these socks

were for the poor, I changed my opinion, and it gave me pleasure to see so many young people working so industriously.

Vienna, whose extent is very considerable, as it comprises no less than thirty-two faubourgs, is full of fine palaces. The Imperial Museum contains pictures of the best masters. The Prater is undoubtedly one of finest promenades in the world. The park of Schönbrunn is also much frequented, especially on Sundays. One frequently meets young couples walking together there, and their position is understood and respected, for no one notices them; the promenades at Schönbrunn being nearly always the prelude to marriage.

I went to several balls, particularly to those given by the Russian Ambassador, Comte Rasowmoffski, which may truly be called charming fêtes. They danced the waltz there with so much energy, that I could not imagine all these persons did not fall from sheer giddiness; but both men and women are so accustomed to this violent exercise, that they never rest as long as the

ball continues. They also frequently danced the Polonaise, which is much less fatiguing, for this dance is a simple promenade. It suits pretty women wonderfully, as it gives time for people to admire their face and figure.

I also went to a court ball. The Emperor Francis II. had married as his second wife Maria-Theresa of the Two Sicilies, daughter of the Queen of Naples. I had painted this princess in 1792; but I found her so changed, that on seeing her at this ball, I could scarcely recognise her. Her nose was longer, her cheeks fallen in, so that she reminded me of her father. I regretted that she did not retain any likeness of her mother, who reminded me of our charming Queen of France.

New Year's day is very brilliant at Vienna, one meets then so many Hungarians in their elegant costume, which suits their tall and well made figures. One of the most remarkable was the Prince Esterhazy; I saw him pass, mounted on a richly caparisoned horse, covered with a horse-cloth sewn with

diamonds. His dress was of great magnificence and sparkled in the sun.

The Polish society in Vienna was very agreeable; the ladies nearly all being amiable and pretty, and I painted some of the most beautiful. They generally frequented the salon of the Princesse Lubomirska, whom I had known in Paris, and often visited at Vienna. She entertained most brilliantly, giving very fine concerts, and charming balls. I also met a great réunion of Poles at the house of the Princesse Czartoriska. Her husband was most kind, and their son has since been made Minister at St. Petersburg.

I was much pleased at meeting again Madame the Comtesse de Brionne, Princess of Lorraine. She had always been kind to me from the time I was a child, and I often supped with her, where I frequently met the valiant Prince de Nassau, so terrible in battle, so gentle and modest in a drawing-room.

I was a constant visitor at the house of the Comtesse de Rombec, sister of Comte

Cobentzel. Madame de Rombec was the best of women! she was witty, with a most happy disposition; she was very charitable, it was at her house that collections were made and lotteries got up for the benefit of the poor. I have often remarked that collections made in a drawing-room are the most efficacious means of assisting them. I remember when at Rome I often passed an evening with good kind Lady Clifford, whom I saw one evening go round purse in hand and make the tour of the company, which was numerous. When she came to me, seeing I had prepared my offering: "No," she said, "I collect for one of my countrymen whom I do not know, but who has lost at play all he possessed; it is we who must help him." I thought this a truly English proceeding.

The Comtesse de Rombec collected in her drawing-room the most distinguished society of Vienna. It was at her house I met Prince Metternich and his son, who since then has been made Prime Minister. I also met again the amiable Prince de Ligne;

he related the charming journey he had made in the Crimea with the Empress Catherine II., which gave me a great desire to see this grand sovereign. I renewed my acquaintance with the charming Duchesse de Guiche; her mother, Madame la Duchesse de Polignac, inhabited a country house near Vienna. It was there she heard of the death of Louis XVI., which affected her to such an extent that her health gave way; but when she heard of the frightful news of the Queen's death, her sorrow changed her so much that her charming face became quite altered, and one could see death written there. She died shortly afterwards, leaving her family and many friends inconsolable for her loss.'

For my own part, I learnt nothing from the newspapers, for I had ceased to read them since the day I opened one at Madame de Rombec's, where I found the names of nine persons of my acquaintance who had been guillotined. It was from my brother that I heard of the horrible event, without adding any particulars. He merely said

that Louis XVI. and Marie Antoinette died on the scaffold! I have not ventured to ask the least question about all that accompanied or preceded this frightful assassination, so that to this day I know nothing except one incident which I will mention later on.

CHAPTER XIII.

Huitzing—Princesse Lichtenstein—I decide on going to Russia—Prince de Ligne lends me the Convent of Caltemberg as a residence.

WHEN spring had set in, I hired a small house in a village near Vienna, and settled myself there for a short time. The village of Huitzing was close to the park of Schönbrunn. The Polignac family lived there in a large square house like the one at Nîmes.

I took with me to Huitzing the large portrait I was then painting of the Princesse de Lichtenstein, in order to finish it. This young princess had a beautiful figure,

her pretty face had a sweet and celestial expression which gave me the idea of representing her as Iris. She was painted full length, flying through the air. Her scarf was of the colours of the rainbow, and floated carelessly around her. As may be imagined, I painted her feet naked; but when the picture was placed in the gallery of the Prince, her husband, the heads of the family were greatly scandalised to perceive that the Princess was exhibited without shoes, and the Prince told me he had placed under the portrait a pretty little pair of shoes, which he told his grandparents had just slipped off and fallen to the ground.

The borders of the Danube are superb, and offered me the means of satisfying my taste for solitary and picturesque promenades. One evening, walking by the river's side, I saw a man in a small boat aim with his gun at a crow, which having killed he placed in his boat; but at the same moment an enormous number of crows flew down upon him. The man was terrified and

ran his boat on shore, taking refuge in a hut on the banks, which I thought was a very prudent measure, for I had not the least doubt but that the crows, in revenge for the death of their comrade, would have killed him. The man having fled, the poor birds approached the dead crow, and carried it away into the branches of some tree close by. Then commenced a series of cries and croaks of the most dismal character. I remained at the spot two or three hours, but their fury had not abated. This scene, which greatly surprised me, threw me into a reverie on the human race, in which I must own all the advantage was on the side of the crows.

I was as happy at Vienna as it was possible to be far from one's people and country. In winter, the city offered me one of the most polished and brilliant societies in Europe, and when fine weather returned, I went with delight to the charms of my little country retreat. I had, therefore, no idea of leaving Austria before it was prudent and safe to return to France, when the Russian

Ambassador and many of my countrymen pressed me to go to St. Petersburg, where I was assured the Empress would view my arrival with pleasure. All the Prince de Ligne had told me of Catherine II. inspired me with a great desire to see this Sovereign. I also thought that a short stay in Russia would complete the fortune I had promised to make before returning to Paris; I decided, therefore, on making the journey.

I was engaged in making preparations for leaving Vienna, when the Prince de Ligne came to see me. He advised me to wait the melting of the snow, and to make sure of my remaining offered me a residence on Mount Caltemberg, an old convent which had been given to him by the Emperor Joseph II. Knowing my predilection for high places, he tempted me by saying that the Caltemberg was the loftiest mountain in the environs of Vienna, and I could not resist the desire to stay there for a short period.

I went there, accompanied by my daughter, her governess, and M. de Rivière, the road

was horrible and rocky which led to the convent. The guardian and his wife, to whom the Prince had recommended us, were most *empressés* in their attentions. They at once prepared our rooms, which were only small cells. Whilst these arrangements were being made, I went to rest on a bench outside, where I had a magnificent view. Beneath me wound the Danube, intersected by small islands, covered with the most beautiful vegetation. I remained three weeks in this beautiful place. M. de Rivière, more of a worldling than myself, frequently went down to Vienna; but for all this we frequently made lovely promenades together.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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